

July 17, 2015

**BISHOP DEBORAH LIEDER KIESEY
West Michigan Conference
The United Methodist Church**

Dear Bishop,

We are leaders of Reconciling Ministry Teams from each conference of the Western Jurisdiction. As a bishop of the whole church, and as a sibling with whom we share the grace of Jesus Christ, we are compelled to bring before you our sense of grief and pain upon hearing the circumstances that led to the resignation of Rev. Benjamin Hutchison, an openly gay and partnered man. We write to also express our support for this man of God who has experienced discrimination at the hands of our denomination.

The call to ministry in the Church is sacred, as every child of God is of sacred worth. To be denied the joy of serving God and community and fulfilling one's duty as an ordained minister because of who you are and whom you love brings immeasurable pain and harm on one's spirit. To let this happen in the context of being bullied rubs insult to the injury inflicted on Rev. Hutchison and his parishioners. In moments such as this, we are reminded as a faith community of John Wesley's first rule – "Do no harm." The United Methodist Church is causing spiritual violence on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons by discriminating against them and their loved ones. This has to end. Stop the harm.

As our denomination struggles to rid itself of oppressive and archaic laws around human sexuality, we ask you to be a pastor and shepherd called to do ministry with all people. We seek your prophetic voice on behalf of many who remain voiceless and cast to the margins of our denomination because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. We believe, that like Queen Esther, we are at this point of our church's history for times such as this – to stand up fearless and seek reconciliation and healing. Will you join us Bishop, and call on the UMC to stop the harmful laws and acts against the LGBT community?

Today, as believers, part of the United Methodist connection, we are all members of Cassopolis UMC. We stand with the Reconciling United Methodists of West Michigan Conference as they express their support for Rev. Hutchison and his husband Monty. We are praying for you Bishop to speak words of love and justice. We know – with faith brimming in our hearts – that someday soon, we will all awaken to the dawning of a new day when we, as a church, will collectively seek repentance for the sin of discrimination and harm the UMC has inflicted against LGBT persons.

With grace and respect,

**Leaders of Conference Reconciling Ministry Clergy and Teams
Western Jurisdiction of the UMC**

Signatories to the Open Letter to Bishop Deborah Lieder Kieseey

On behalf of all Reconciling Ministry Clergy and Teams in the Western Jurisdiction:

Rev. Dr. Israel I. Alvaran RMN Western Regional Organizer – San Francisco CA
Philippines Conference

Alaska Missionary Conference:

Arthur Carpenter	St. John UMC, Anchorage AK
Rev. Melissa Engel	Douglas Community UMC, Douglas AK
James Sutton	Aldersgate UMC, Juneau AK
Rev. Susan Boegli	Aldersgate UMC, Juneau AK
Michele Vasquez	Soldotna UMC, Soldotna AK
Carroll Knutson	Soldotna UMC, Soldotna AK
Averyl Veliz	Northern Light United Church, Juneau AK
Magen Boegli	Aldersgate UMC, Juneau AK
Lacey Davis	Aldersgate UMC, Juneau AK
Elizabeth Kell	Aldersgate UMC, Juneau AK
Bob and Mart Mitchell	Anchor Park UMC, Anchorage AK
Sheri Witehorn	Anchor Park UMC, Anchorage AK
Marilyn Carpenter	St. John UMC, Anchorage AK

California-Nevada Conference:

Beth Synder	Florin UMC, Sacramento CA
Jana Kattenhorn	CN Conference Committee on Reconciliation, Manteca CA
Rev. John Oda	Lake Park UMC, Oakland CA
Sydney Pense	St. Paul's UMC, San Jose CA
William Groth	Asbury UMC, Livermore CA
Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto	Glide Memorial Church, San Francisco CA
Mary Ann Sasaki	Wesley UMC, San Jose CA
Dale Sasaki	Wesley UMC, San Jose CA
Carol Perry	Asbury UMC, Livermore CA
Ellen Terry Shaner	San Jose First UMC, San Jose CA
Rev. Judy Shook	Ukiah UMC, Ukiah CA
Frank Treadway	First UMC, Redding CA
Robert Wilson	First UMC, Redding CA
Rev. Pamela Kurtz	Lake Merritt UMC, Oakland CA
Annie Bakaleinikoff	First UMC, Redding CA
Maria Brillante	Santa Clara UMC, Santa Clara CA
Dollie Forney	Good Samaritan UMC, Cupertino CA
Ginny Johnson	Good Samaritan UMC, Cupertino CA
Rev. Sandra Daniels	Freedom House, Campbell CA
Rev. Patrick Davis	Morgan Hill UMC, Morgan Hill CA

California-Pacific Conference:

Jason Takagi	San Luis Obispo UMC, San Luis Obispo CA
Karen Ginoza	Harris UMC, Honolulu HI
Rev. Rod Sprott	United University Church, Los Angeles CA
Rev. Piula Alailima	Wesley UMC, Honolulu HI
Sharon Tool	United University Church, Los Angeles CA
Rev. Paige Eaves	University UMC, Irvine CA
Rev. Sandra Olewine	First UMC, Pasadena CA
Rev. Rick Uhis	San Luis Obispo UMC, San Luis Obispo CA
Rev. Richard Bolin (ret.)	Los Osos CA
Dr. and Mrs. Vance Rodgers	San Luis Obispo UMC, San Luis Obispo CA
Rev. Greg Norton	First UMC, Pasadena CA
Richard Glodo	Trinity UMC, Los Osos CA
Darlene Rodrigues	Harris UMC, Honolulu HI
Rev. Mandy Flemming	Laguna Beach UMC, Laguna Beach CA
Norma Kehrberg	Harris UMC, Honolulu CA
Patricia McRae	First UMC, Pasadena CA
Rev. Barbara Ripple	Hawaii District, Kaneohe HI
Davis Mason	San Luis Obispo Wesley Foundation, San Luis Obispo CA
Rev. Robert Miyake-Stoner (ret.)	Aiea HI
Bruce Baraw	Pacific Beach UMC, La Mesa CA
Rev. Connie Millsap	First UMC, Pasadena CA
JP Harris	First UMC, Pasadena CA
Cheryl McDonald	United University Church, Los Angeles CA
Stephen Burke	First UMC, Pasadena CA
Rev. Gilbert Stones	Trinity UMC, Los Osos CA

Desert Southwest Conference:

Glenda Hill	DSW Board of Church and Society, Williams AZ
Rev. Stephen Govett	DSW Welcoming and Reconciling Committee, Phoenix AZ
Rev. Thomas Boller (ret.)	Sun City West, AZ
Sylvia Hardin	University UMC, Las Vegas NV
Tamara Voas	First UMC, Phoenix AZ
Dr. Gene Hill	Flagstaff Federated Community Church, Flagstaff AZ

Oregon-Idaho Conference:

Deborah Maria	OR-ID Reconciling United Methodists, West Linn OR
Debbie Mallis	Hillview UMC, Boise ID
Colleen McClain	Portland First UMC, Portland OR
Rev. Jeremy Smith	Portland First UMC, Portland OR
Rebecca Wegener	Hillview UMC, Boise ID
Rev. Vernon Groves	Portland First UMC, Portland OR
Rev. Elizabeth Groves (ret.)	Newport OR

Dr. Marcia Belcheir	Hillview UMC, Boise ID
Richard Turner	OR-ID Reconciling United Methodists, Portland OR
Rev. Richard Burdon	OR-ID Conference, Portland OR
Babs Eggleston	Newman UMC, Grants Pass OR
Bishop Calvin McConnell	Lake Oswego UMC, Lake Oswego OR
Velma Duell McConnell	OR-ID Reconciling United Methodists, Portland OR
Rev. Dave Bean	Woodlawn and Pioneer UMCs, Portland OR
Dr. Ronald Oliveira	Wilbur UMC, Wilbur OR
Nadine Wiles	Junction City UMC, Junction City OR
Gwendolyn Kimball	OR-ID Reconciling United Methodists, New Meadows ID
Martha Martinez	First UMC, Corvallis OR
Rev. Ruth Marsh	Trinity UMC, Idaho Falls ID
Dr. Staney Aschenbrenner	Lake Oswego UMC, Lake Oswego OR
Claudia Roberts	OR-ID Reconciling United Methodists, Portland OR
Jean Mount	Newman UMC, Grants Pass OR
Theodore Adams	Gresham UMC, Gresham OR
Rev. Dr. Charles Wallace	Willamette University, Salem OR
James Woods	Newman UMC, Grants Pass OR

Pacific Northwest Conference:

Jane Brazell	United Church in University Place, Tacoma WA
Dr. Carol Waymack	Woodland Park UMC, Seattle WA
Rev. Terri Stewart	Youth Chaplaincy Coalition, Seattle WA
Rev. Vince Hart (ret.)	PNW-Reconciling Ministries Network
Rev. Paul Mitchell	Rainier Beach UMC, Seattle WA
Larry Fox	Freeland WA
Donna Ertel Riley	Langley UMC, Langley WA
Ramona Hall	Stanwood UMC, Stanwood WA
Rev. Dr. Bonnie Chandler-Warren (ret.)	Olympia WA
Rev. Dr. Carol Mariano	Haller Lake UMC, Seattle WA
Rev. Nancy Yount (ret.)	Seattle WA
Joan Appleby	Bothell UMC, Bothell WA
Steven Erickson	Wesley UMC, Yakima WA
Pamela Milan	Kent UMC, Kent WA
Connie Curran	Woodinville WA
Karen McInerney	Langley UMC, Langley WA
Rev. William Gordon	Marysville UMC, Snohomish WA
Barbara Osborne	Haller Lake UMC, Seattle WA
Rev. Jan Bolerjack	Riverton Park UMC, Tukwila WA
Rev. Terry Hall	Garden Street UMC, Bellingham WA
Abby Duke Eagleson	First UMC, Bellevue WA
Rev. Dr. Joanne Carlson Brown	Tibbetts UMC, Seattle WA
Lisa Blum	United Church of Ferndale, Ferndale WA
Jennifer McLaughlin	Edmonds UMC, Edmonds WA
Rev. Alissa Bertsch Johnson	Cheney UMC, Cheney WA

Rev. Carol Davies	Stevenson UMC, Stevenson WA
Rev. Denise Westfall Neuschwander	Vancouver Heights UMC, Vancouver WA
Leo Baldwin	Langley UMC, Langley WA
Rev. Cathlynn Law	United Church University Place, Tacoma WA
Carrie Goodnight	Tibbetts UMC, Seattle WA
Andrea Wallis	Haller Lake UMC, Seattle WA

Rocky Mountain Conference:

Pastor Jaime Nieves	Yuma UMC, Yuma CO
Ghetta Smith	Christ UMC, Salt Lake City UT
Martha Allison	Heart of Longmont UMC, Longmont CO
Nancy Swope	Heart of Longmont UMC, Longmont CO
Mary Blue	Heart of Longmont UMC, Longmont CO
Rev. Maggie Roe	Rocky Mountain Reconciling Team, Denver CO
Sandra Ziegler	First UMC, Boulder CO
Sharon Sanita	University Park UMC, Denver CO
Rev. Keith Watson (ret.)	Longmont CO
Kimberly Scott	Park Hill UMC, Denver CO
Mary Ann Watson	Heart of Longmont UMC, Longmont CO
Katherine Bradley	Heart of Longmont UMC, Longmont CO
Kurt Lausman	UMC, Westminster CO
Rev. Paul Kottke	Rocky Mountain Conference, Denver CO
Ben Roe	Arvada UMC, Arvada CO

Yellowstone Conference:

Mary Maheras	Grace UMC, Billings MT
Rev. Sarah Beck	Grace UMC, Billings MT
Pastor Bryan Moreland	Open Ministries, Billings MT
Rev. Marianne Niesen	St. Paul's UMC, Helena MT
Jill Melcher	St. Paul's UMC, Helena MT
Nancy Flikkema	Bozeman UMC, Bozeman MT
Rev. Ira Robison	First UMC, Missoula MT
Carolyn Kay Robison	First UMC, Missoula MT
Ann Walters	Grace UMC, Billings MT
Rev. Lyle Hamilton	Yellowstone Conference, Helena MT
Rev. Charles Heath (ret.)	Grace UMC, Billings MT
Sharon Ferris	Grace UMC, Billings MT
Claudia Fife	Laurel UMC, Lauren MT