



## Willow Grove United Methodist Church

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September 15, 2019

An Open Letter to the Willow Grove United Methodist Church Congregation:

In March of 2019, over 60 members and friends of WGUMC signed a letter addressed to our Bishop, Peggy Johnson, in dissenting response to the General Conference's passage of the "Traditionalist Plan" which excludes members of the LGBTQ+ communities from full inclusion in our United Methodist Church.

Our letter stated in part that the signers believe God's salvation through Christ includes everyone. Our letter also said that we support publishing a statement to our local community which says, rather than excluding, we welcome and affirm lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBTQ+) people. We held a follow-up congregational meeting for feedback on this issue in April. The overwhelming majority of more than 43 attendees advocated for an inclusive statement of welcome.

The WGUMC Church Council and various committees of the church have met many times since early February to talk about this issue. At the July 24 meeting of the Council, the idea was raised to actually broaden the statement of affirmation to include the wide range of people WGUMC strives to include as well as those who might feel, for varying reasons, that they are not welcome in the United Methodist Church. The Church Council and sub-committees feel strongly that we need to tell all people in our community that we welcome them.

To that end, having heard and incorporated many of your thoughts and wishes, we offer this affirmation as reflective of who we are and want to be here at Willow Grove United Methodist:

### TO OUR COMMUNITY:

Willow Grove United Methodist Church strives to welcome and affirm all people without regard to age, race, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability or disability, income, social status, educational achievement or faith history.

We value the diversity within our community. We believe that in so doing, this diversity provides human depth and richer experience as together we engage and explore God's Word. We seek to learn, grow and discern God's will for ourselves and our world in light of God's love. We take seriously our responsibility to care for each other in the ways Jesus modeled and taught. We trust a loving, Holy Spirit which helps guide our learning, our thanksgiving and our missions.

At Willow Grove United Methodist Church, all persons have sacred worth including those who identify as LGBTQ+. Come, worship with us, celebrate God's love, share that love, and help all of us make a positive difference in our communities and world.

This letter and affirmation were prepared by members of the Church Council, sub-committees and staff of Willow Grove United Methodist Church. We are very happy to listen to your feedback and comments.