

SHADY GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | SHORT PUMP

What Does it Mean to be a Welcoming Church?

Shady Grove United Methodist Church (SGUMC) strives to be a welcoming church, and as individuals and a church, we have welcomed many people into our church life over the years. There has been one area, however, in which the worldwide United Methodist Church (UMC) has not truly welcomed all - we have not fully welcomed our LGTBQ+ community.

At the 2024 United Methodist General Conference, the delegate body voted to remove the language from 1984 which banned the ordination of clergy who are "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" and voted that district superintendents are not to penalize clergy or churches for holding, or refraining from holding, same-sex weddings. Additionally, the delegate body removed the statement that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. The new language mirrors the denomination's desire to include all persons and to include those with moderate, traditional and progressive views within a "Big Tent" church, as exemplified in the UMC motto "Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors."

To digest the General Conference changes, over 100 members of our congregation participated in the Discover, Discuss, Discern sessions to determine what it means to Belong, Become and Bless in light of them, since this is how we grow disciples. The sharing that came out of these sessions are captured in the word cloud below, which reflects the prayerful sense of call among the members of SGUMC who participated. SGUMC believes in fostering an inclusive and respectful faith community.



While SGUMC was completing its own discernment work, the Judicial Council of the UMC ruled that pastors have authority over worship matters, including building use for weddings. Our pastors have affirmed our work, supporting that SGUMC believes all persons called to Christian marriage, including same-sex couples who love each other and are committed to each other and to the church, may seek marriage preparation and weddings here.

Your pastors and church leaders know that there are differing views within our church with respect to this issue. We believe that our tent is big enough for diverging opinions and that our love for Christ and each other is greater than these differences.

Your Church Council