

1 **1Petition to the 2008 Western Jurisdiction**

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3 **TITLE: Western Jurisdiction in Ministry to All of God's Children**

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5 **Submitted by:** Amory Peck and Sharon Moe, Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

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7 We are United Methodists of the Western Jurisdiction of the United States. We are called to be  
8 "a home for all God's people, gathered around a table of reconciliation and transformation."  
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10 As the church in the midst of an area of great geographic and human diversity, God has blessed  
11 us with many kinds of differences, including diversities of sexual orientation and gender identity.  
12 We now proclaim that those diversities of gender identity and sexual orientation are good  
13 elements of God's creation.  
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15 In particular, we affirm that many of our clergy and congregations are being called upon to  
16 witness to God's enduring love by being in ministry with people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual,  
17 or transgender. We encourage all pastors, laity and congregations to be compassionate and bold  
18 in their welcome, ministry and love with all people, trusting that we, the clergy and laity of the  
19 Western Jurisdiction, do not expect our leaders to withhold ministry from anyone. We charge our  
20 clergy, laity and congregations to consider seriously the example of Jesus, who was willing to set  
21 aside religious standards of holiness in the interest of a ministry that reached out to all people.  
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23 We stand in the tension between changing laws in our some of our communities and the polity of  
24 our denomination. Some of our states recognize and honor same gender relationships with  
25 marriage or domestic partnership and forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender  
26 identity. The polity of the United Methodist Church demands that "ceremonies that celebrate  
27 homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our  
28 churches."  
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30 In the midst of this tension, we declare that we will be in full ministry with all who come to us  
31 and that we will not penalize our clergy or churches for being agents of this ministry in God's  
32 name. We ask that all those with supervisory responsibilities take this statement seriously and  
33 find creative ways to implement our intention.  
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35 Furthermore, in order to prepare for future changes in the denomination we challenge the  
36 Western Jurisdiction to train Boards of Ordained Ministries, Cabinets and Episcopal leadership  
37 to equip, empower, recruit and appoint, effective leaders to inclusive and welcoming churches  
38 and establish new inclusive and welcoming communities.  
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40 Here we stand; we can do no other.