



June 2, 2025  
A Note from Pastor Jon

**Dear Friends,**

*Still Standing, Still Celebrating: 4 Years as a Reconciling Church*

In June of 2021, after a thoughtful and prayerful discernment process, the membership of Hilliard United Methodist Church overwhelmingly voted to become a Reconciling Congregation in the United Methodist Church.

It was more than a statement. **It was a commitment—to justice, to radical love, and to the full dignity and sacred worth of all persons in the life of the church.**



While much of the emphasis at the time centered on affirming LGBTQIA+ persons, becoming a Reconciling Congregation has always meant more. It is a broader, bolder vision of what it means to follow Jesus and to

welcome all.

What we voted to affirm in 2021—and what we've continued to live out ever since—is this statement shared by all Reconciling Congregations:

*"We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all.  
We welcome and affirm persons of all sexual orientations, gender*

*identities, and gender expressions.*

*We welcome and affirm persons of all races, ethnicities, ages, economic statuses, family structures, and physical or mental abilities.*

*We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities.*

*As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed.”*

This month, we mark our 4th anniversary as a Reconciling Church with both joy and renewed resolve.

Since that 2021 vote, much has changed across the United Methodist Church. In 2024, through overwhelming support at General Conference, the UMC finally removed harmful language that barred LGBTQ persons from ordination and prohibited clergy from officiating same-gender weddings. These changes reflect years of prayer, protest, and persistence by Reconciling communities around the world—and they are absolutely worth celebrating.



**But our work is far from finished.**



Choosing to be a Reconciling Congregation is not a one-time declaration—it's a continual posture of welcome, solidarity, and advocacy. It's not just about aligning with a policy; it's about aligning with the Gospel. As the Apostle Paul writes, *"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:28).

And in today's political and cultural climate, that Gospel witness is more urgent than ever.

As some states and federal leaders seek to roll back DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) efforts, censor inclusive education, and cast suspicion on communities who simply long to live in peace, the church must not be silent. Jesus said, *“Whatever you did for one of the least of these siblings of mine, you did for me”* (Matthew 25:40).

When LGBTQ+ youth are being targeted by legislation, when families are criminalized for affirming their children, and when the word “ally” is twisted into an insult—our calling is clear: we must show up, speak out, and keep widening the circle.

**This is why we celebrate PRIDE.**

Not because it’s trendy.

Not because it’s political in the partisan sense.

We celebrate because we believe love should never be hidden, and no one should have to wonder if God’s house has room for them. As Scripture reminds us, *“Perfect love casts out fear”* (1 John 4:18), and **we are committed to building a church where fear does not have the final word.**

This year marks our fifth year as one of the top sponsors of the Hilliard Pride Festival—a witness of hospitality, joy, and God’s inclusive love to our wider community. We invite you to join us at Hilliard Station Park on Saturday, June 7, from 12–3pm. Wear your rainbow gear, HUMC t-shirt if you have one, or simply bring your affirming spirit, and help us show that love is louder.



Then, on Sunday, June 8, we’ll celebrate our Reconciling Anniversary in each of our services of worship with a special visit from Max Collier, our former seminary intern who just graduated from MTSO. It will be a time of reflection, celebration, and a joyful look toward what comes next.

This month—and every month—we recommit to being a church where all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, ethnicity, age, economic status, family structure, or physical or mental ability,

can serve, lead, worship, and belong. Not just quietly accepted—but loudly celebrated.

Because, simply put, that's what love does.

**And love still has work to do.**

See you Sunday,  
Pastor Jon



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