

**'Tis a Pleasant Thing to See**  
**Report from the Steering Committee**  
**Southern Province Resolution 12**  
**October 8, 2017**

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### **Part I. The Text of Resolution 12**

The Southern Province Synod of 2014 passed the following resolution, "Study and Discernment Regarding Homosexuality":

WHEREAS the Unity Synod of 2002 and the Unity Board meeting of 2010 encouraged dialogue within the various provinces of our church about homosexuality in the church; and,

WHEREAS during the 2010-2014 inter-synodal period, the Provincial Elders' Conference has taken some steps, but has not fully implemented the call of the church expressed in 2010 Synod resolution #24: Homosexuality Study and Discernment;

therefore be it RESOLVED That, the Synod of 2014 reaffirms the spirit and intent of the 2010 Synod resolution #24, specifically: to provide leadership, resources and a process for a conversation about homosexuality in the church that includes diverse viewpoints, and opportunities for open and honest discussion, study and discernment; and,

RESOLVED That, this process of dialogue and discernment should take into account similar efforts made, and decisions that have been or may be reached by our sister provinces within the Unity, as well as any actions of the 2014 Unity Board and 2016 Unity Synod; and,

RESOLVED That, the Provincial Elders' Conference should fulfill what is stated in this resolution in a manner which it determines is best and prior to the Synod of 2018; and,

RESOLVED That, the task force should be appointed by September 15, 2014 and begin its work by November 1, 2014.

## **Part II. The Beginning of Our Work**

Throughout our work, we have been grateful for the support and encouragement of the Provincial Elders Conference and of the four bishops of the Unity residing in the Winston-Salem area. Their prayer support, and their wisdom and guidance, have been cherished by our committee.

In the summer of 2014, the Provincial Elders' Conference appointed Sister Nola Reed Knouse, Brother Robert Sawyer, and Brother Craig Troutman to serve as the nucleus of a steering committee to guide this process. The first meeting of this group was held on September 15, 2014, with Brother David Guthrie of the Provincial Elders' Conference present. In this meeting we acknowledged the need to listen to the Unity Synod of 2002, which recognized that the Moravian Church worldwide is not of one mind, and declared that "this issue does not rise to the doctrinal equivalent of the New Testament confession, 'Jesus is Lord,' but it is a biblical, theological, and pastoral issue on which the church must dialogue".<sup>1</sup> Thus our conversations and discernment must address the biblical, theological, and pastoral aspects.

Questions that were discussed early on in the process included these:

- How do we avoid the pitfall of a two-sided, "for-versus-against" debate?
- How can we make a safe space in the conversations for everyone?
- How should clergy and laity interact in this process? Would we need to have separate conversations, in order to provide that safe space for both?

By later in 2014 we began to work to expand our committee, and with the approval of the PEC, added five more, so that our steering committee has been composed of these brothers and sisters:

Jeff Carter, pastor, Little Church on the Lane  
Joyce Carter, member, Trinity Moravian Church  
Betty Helms, pastor, New Hope Moravian Church (NC)  
Nola Knouse, director, Moravian Music Foundation  
Greg Knouse, member, Fries Moravian Church  
Robert Sawyer, retired pastor  
Craig Troutman, pastor, Raleigh Moravian Church  
Steve Wilson, retired pastor

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<sup>1</sup> (Policy #908, Unity Synod of 2002).

Our work in fall 2014 focused on two areas: preparation of a resource list for individuals and congregations (Attachment 1), and preparation for conversations. Taking into account the work done by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we formulated a continuum of five perspectives regarding homosexuality and the church:

1. Some in our church who experience a homosexual orientation are not comfortable with their sexuality and have struggled with questions of self-worth and acceptance.
2. Some in our church who experience a homosexual orientation understand it as their natural sexuality and want to affirm it as normal and healthy for them. They wish to have committed same-sex unions recognized and honored by our church and desire to be accountable for living faithfully, lovingly, and generously in faithful union with a partner.
3. Some in our church who have come into close contact – in family and in friendships – with people of homosexual orientation, who are Christians, come to share that positive view. When they share in the pain of censure that may be the experience of their family members or friends, they are often motivated to advocate full acceptance of homosexuality.
4. Some in our church struggle to come to grips with this issue, wrestling with their interpretation of scripture and their desire to include all persons within the embrace of Christ's church. They are seeking help to understand the differing perspectives in order to determine where they stand.
5. Some in our church have experienced homosexuality and homosexual activity as contrary to God's will. For them, this experience upholds the authority of the Bible and the teaching of our church. Some within this group view those who have worked at reorientation or maintained celibacy as inspiring examples.

### **Part III. The “Agenda” of the Resolution 12 Steering Committee**

Throughout our process – for over three years – perhaps the most-frequently-asked question has been, “What’s your agenda?” Or, “What’s the final result of all this going to be?” We have consistently replied that our purpose is to hold conversations and provide resources. Our charge was not to prepare legislation, and we will not do so. Following months of prayer, we crafted the following as a statement of the “agenda” for our committee’s work:

Our agenda has been to encourage dialogue and provide new opportunities for the people of the Southern Province to discern more of the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our continued differences concerning homosexuality in the church. We believe through the study of scripture, the discipline of prayer, and the faith sharing of believers, the Holy Spirit can provide each of us greater insight and clarity moving each of us to a deeper relationship with our Savior. In our deeper relationship with the Savior, unity grows within our Province and our differences become smaller. In this task, we remember the words of Zinzendorf, “the nearer each one comes in knowing the Savior, the more enriched, more glad of heart, and more unwavering grows the communion among his members.”

## **Part IV. Activities Related to Resolution 12**

### **1. February 2015: Leadership Focus presentation**

Nola Knouse led a discussion at the provincial Leadership Focus gathering in February of 2015 on the work of the Resolution 12 steering committee. The title of the presentation was “’Tis a Pleasant Thing to See: Fostering Respectful Conversation”, and topics discussed included a review of Resolution 12; a look at what has happened in other provinces; what the steering committee was and was not doing; a look at the conversations organized by Sister Adriana Craver; a schedule of upcoming events; and a review of available resources for study. About a dozen people participated in this workshop.

### **2. Spring-Summer 2015: Conversations, Phase 1 – Like-Minded Groups**

Our first phase of small group conversations was among people who approach the topic from a similar perspective. This was not for the purpose of building or strengthening a case to be used “against” others who think differently, but rather simply to create as safe a space as possible – to talk about a subject which is very difficult for many people in an environment where no one need fear criticism or disagreement. Later on we would move to conversations among people with differing perspectives.

We invited participation in these conversations through bulletin inserts, Provincial Ties, Facebook posts, the provincial website, and emails to many individuals who had expressed interest, inviting them to identify their perspective. We then established meeting times and locations, and placed people into these groups, each facilitated by two committee members, most often of differing perspectives. We created a liturgy and a Covenant for Christian Conversation (Attachment 2) used at each gathering. Using this as an opening, we then discussed three questions with each group:

1. What brought you to the perspective you now hold? As a follow-up, would you care to say anything more about your perspective?
2. What would you like to ask someone who holds a different perspective? As a follow-up, what can you learn from those who hold other perspectives?
3. When we are together with people with diverse viewpoints, what will help make the conversation fruitful? What guidance can you give the Steering Committee in our planning?

These questions were designed to invite stories from the participants rather than specific intellectual content. With our second question we wished to invite people to acknowledge, implicitly at least, that there are things we can learn from those who think differently from ourselves.

In most of these conversations we, as facilitators, were deeply moved by the courage and honesty of our brothers and sisters who took part. By far the majority came with open hearts ready to engage fully in conversation, seeing this phase as the opening of a longer process of discernment and sharing. In these meetings we heard stories of deep hurt and longing; we witnessed tears and long-felt anguish; we were moved by the love we heard, from people of all perspectives regarding homosexuality – love for the Lord Jesus, love for the Moravian Church, love for brothers and sisters. And we were often troubled as we witnessed unwillingness to consider another perspective, unreadiness to learn from one another, and what we could only hear as hardness of heart – again, from people of all perspectives. These experiences, and the answers to the questions above, sent us to more fervent prayer and brought us into deeper relationships of love for one another on our committee.

*Statistics of Participation in Phase 1 Conversations*

- 32 small groups
- 200 participants
- 10 clergy-only groups; 1 meeting with the PEC; 1 meeting with the bishops
- 20 lay groups: 1 “group 2”, 10 “group 3”, 3 “group 4”, 6 “group 5” (see above for definition of the 5 perspectives)

*Congregations represented by lay people:*

*Advent, Calvary, Clemmons, Fairview, Friedberg, Good Shepherd, First (Greensboro), Home, Hope, Kernersville, Konnoak Hills, Leaksville, Macedonia, Mizpah, New Hope (NC), New Philadelphia, Olivet, Raleigh, Rural Hall, Trinity*

*Congregations represented in clergy meetings:*

*Advent, Bethania, Calvary, Christ the King, Clemmons, Come & Worship, First (Greensboro), Friedberg, Fries, Good Shepherd, Grace, Home, Hopewell, Immanuel, Kernersville, Konnoak Hills, Leaksville, Little Church on the Lane, Macedonia, Mayodan, Moravia, New Beginnings, New Hope (NC), Peace, Pine Chapel, Raleigh, Rolling Hills, Rural Hall, St. Phillips, Trinity*

*NC Congregations with no participation in the first phase:*

*Ardmore, Bethabara, Christ, Enterprise, Friedland, Fulp, Hope, King, Messiah, Oak Grove, Providence, Union Cross, Unity*

### **3. Fall 2015 – Winter 2016: Two Public Forums**

October 4, 2015, Shirley Recital Hall, Salem Fine Arts Center: About 220 people present (full auditorium). Speakers were the Rev. John C. Rankin (the more “traditional” view that homosexuality is contrary to scripture), and the Rev. Susan Parker (the more “liberal” view towards full inclusiveness of all sexual orientations and gender identities; in absentia, read by Rev. Riddick Weber). About 50 questions were submitted, in writing, by the audience; the speakers answered a few, and the rest were sent to them to answer by email. Rev. Parker answered all the ones submitted to her, but Rev. Rankin never completed the request. By our agreement with both speakers, the answers were not to be posted on the website until they were received from both speakers independently.

January 19, 2016, New Philadelphia Moravian Church: About 350 people were present as the Rt. Rev. Sam Gray spoke about Moravian interpretation of scripture (past and present). Rev. Worth Green gave a meditation as part of opening worship, wherein he described his own changing views over time. Again, questions were submitted for Bishop Gray to answer, and he addressed some during the time allotted.

Each of these presentations was made within a context of worship (Attachment 3a and b). Both forums were video-recorded, and the videos placed on the Southern Province website. At both of these forums, we heard carefully-reasoned and developed talks presented by people of deep faith in Christ, love for Christ’s Church, and for people. At both forums, most of the questions submitted seemed to be done so in a spirit of honest inquiry, but some were harshly critical of the speakers and of the entire process.

#### **4. Winter-Spring 2016: Conversations, Phase 2 – Diverse-Minded Groups**

We next moved into a second phase of face-to-face conversations, these among people who did not share the same perspective. We decided to hold these within the context of a shared meal, in the hope that sharing table fellowship would make the challenging conversation topic easier. Meals were free to the participants, who were asked to sign up and indicate their perspective on homosexuality and the church. We are grateful for the hospitality of Rural Hall, Trinity, New Philadelphia, Christ, and Kernersville Moravian Church for these meals and meetings.

Participants were assigned to tables of 5 to 8 people, designed to reflect the diversity of viewpoints in our province, with married couples not seated together unless they specifically requested it. Each table had a facilitator, who had attended a training session led by Br. Steve Wilson. We began each gathering with a short liturgy and the Covenant for Christian Conversation (Attachment 4). Following the meal, three questions were discussed at each table:

1. What is your best hope for our time together ?
2. Now that you are here, what is one thought you wish to share in truth and love which expresses your heart concerning homosexuality in the Moravian Church?
3. What is needed for us to have fruitful conversations in truth and love as Moravians concerning homosexuality in the Moravian Church?

Members of the Steering Committee “floated” to listen in on some of the table conversations and to be available to answer questions or step in if needed, if a conversation became too difficult; facilitators knew that they could call for assistance if they felt the need. We are very, very grateful for the prayerful work of the facilitators: Walter Bishop, Betsy Bombick, Ruth Burcaw, Zach Dease, Peggy Dodson, Carol Foltz, Hal Garrison, Tony Hayworth, Andrew Heil, John Jackman, Keith Kapp, John D. Rights, Rick Sides, Gray Styers, Ginny Tobiassen, and Betsey Willard.

We concluded each gathering by sharing in a prayer written by our bishops (Attachment 5), which the participants could then take home for their refrigerator door, and by inviting them to share the right hand of fellowship with all at their table.

As with the Phase 1 conversations, most were respectful and courteous, and most people seemed to be listening carefully and with open minds and hearts. A few tables had difficult conversations; at least one person came with a long prepared statement to read; at least one

seemed determined to debate and try to convince others to change their minds; and at least one came harshly critical of the entire process and of the clergy and provincial leadership as a whole. However, these were the exceptions, and many participants and facilitators reported positive experiences with these conversations. If nothing else, these meals and conversations demonstrated that we, as brothers and sisters in Christ in the Moravian Church, can talk about difficult topics and stay in relationship with one another. For by far the majority of our members, we can hold Christian conversation with people who don't think like we do, and for that we remain very thankful. We believe this can serve as a model for future conversations on other difficult topics.

*Statistics of Participation in Phase 2 Conversations*

- *Five mealtime gatherings (4 for clergy and lay, one just for clergy)*
- *250 participants, many of whom had not participated in Phase 1*
- *44 clergy (36 active, 8 retired)*
- *16 facilitators*
- *7 PEC members*
- *4 bishops*

*Congregations represented by lay people:*

*Advent, Ardmore, Bethania, Calvary, Christ, Clemmons, Come & Worship, Fairview, First (Greensboro), Friedberg, Friedland, Fries, Grace, Home, Kernersville, King, Konnoak Hills, Leaksville, Macedonia, New Hope, New Philadelphia, Oak Grove, Olivet, Raleigh, Rural Hall, Trinity, Unity*

*Congregations represented only by facilitator or PEC member:*

*Covenant, Hope, Hopewell, Immanuel New Eden, Little Church on the Lane, Moravia, New Beginnings, Peace*

*NC Congregations with no participation in the second phase:*

*Bethabara, Bethesda, Christ the King, Enterprise, Fulp, Messiah, Mizpah, Pine Chapel, Providence, Union Cross*

## **5. Interlude: More Committee Work**

Throughout these months, the committee continued to meet regularly and discuss future activities. We struggled together with images for the life and future of the Southern Province with regard to the question of homosexuality and the church, and we have never lost sight of the fact that we are not in agreement – in fact, even among the committee members, we represent the range of perspectives on this topic. We have remained committed to our relationship as brothers and sisters, and throughout this process we as a committee have grown in our faith, in love for one another, and in hope for the future.

We recognize that this topic is part of at least two larger conversations: how do we live within the church with people who do not think the same as we do on any given topic; and the relationships of provincial versus congregational decision-making. We recognized that “unity” does not mean “uniformity”; that our unity is in Christ, not in relationship to any topic or issue. Returning to our agenda statement, we reflected on Zinzendorf’s image that, as individual members each draw closer to Christ, we all draw closer to one another in relationships of love.

An image that became very meaningful to us was that of the railroad track. A train travels on a track with two parallel rails; and those two rails will never intersect. Yet the train travels safely on that track because of what connects those rails – the crossties. We saw the Moravian Church, Southern Province, as a train traveling on at least two parallel, non-intersecting rails regarding homosexuality and the church – yet those rails are tied together by the cross of Christ, enabling us all to move forward together in love.

## 6. Summer-Fall 2016, Winter 2017: Videos for Congregational Conversations

Four video recordings for congregational and group conversations have been produced, each accompanied by a set of discussion questions designed to allow participants to engage the material presented in the video. These were recorded by John Jackman and approved by the committee before release. Each video lasts about 25 to 30 minutes, to allow time for discussion by those present at the showings.

1. Introduction – written and presented by Nola Knouse, approved by the committee
2. Theological perspective: the person and work of the Holy Spirit: introduced by Nola Knouse, presentations by the bishops (Wayne Burkette, Sam Gray, Graham Rights, Lane Sapp)
3. Pastoral perspective: introduced by Nola Knouse, conversation among committee members Craig Troutman, Jeff Carter, Bob Sawyer, Betty Helms, Nola Knouse, Steve Wilson
4. Biblical perspective: introduced by Nola Knouse, conversation between the Rev. Margaret Leinbach and the Rev. Tim Sapp

We encourage congregations, RCC's, small groups, and individuals to watch these videos. They are also accompanied by a "Leader's Guide" (Attachment 6), and members of the committee are available to be present as invited.

## 7. Fall 2016 – Fall 2017: Worship and Prayer Services

A series of provincial worship and prayer services has been planned and led by the bishops. The purpose of these was not to talk about homosexuality – in fact, it was not at all a topic of the services – but rather to give us opportunity to worship together, to sing and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon our province in this and in all matters. These services were held:

Date/Location	Topic	Presider
September 25, 2016, Fairview Moravian	The Call of Christ	Graham Rights
January 22, 2017, Clemmons Moravian	Prayer and Discernment	Lane Sapp
April 30, 2017, Bethania Moravian	Unity and Diversity	All bishops
July 9, 2017, Friedberg Moravian	Holy Scripture	Wayne Burkette
October 8, 2017, Friedland Moravian	Our Call to Mission and Service	Sam Gray

We are grateful to the congregations that graciously hosted these services, and to our organists Lewis Phillips, Paul Knouse, Scott Rainey, Marty Stanberry, and Raymond Ebert. About 60 people attended the first service; about 75 the second one; about 60 the third one; about 70 the fourth one; and the fifth one follows today's reporting forum. (See Attachment 7 for the orders of worship.)

#### **8. Fall 2016 - Fall 2017: Meetings with Regional Conferences of Churches**

We have offered to meet with Regional Conferences of Churches at their convenience. One has taken us up on the offer - the South Branch RCC, August 25, 2016. Bob Sawyer and Nola Knouse attended their meeting at Hope Moravian Church, and talked with the representatives about what has been done. We are still willing and eager to do this.

## **Part V. Concluding Observations**

### **First, A Look Backward at Our Work:**

#### **1. What questions has our process attempted to address?**

We have not attempted to solve the question of how homosexual persons are to be included in the life and ministry of the Moravian Church, Southern Province. We have not sought a consensus, nor have we taken the pulse of the province. We can compile statistics about participation, but that tells us only the makeup of the body of members who participated, not at all anything about the overall opinion of the total membership.

We have provided materials and an avenue for conversation and discernment for our members. The BCM Resource Center added many publications upon our request, and the resource list and videos are available to all of our members.

We have sought to broach the question of how we can live and minister together, and we encourage all our members to ponder this question. We believe that when we focus our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and his call to service, then specific issues upon which we disagree become of less significance.

This is not to minimize the importance of the question of participation of our homosexual brothers and sisters in the life of the church. Nor is it intended to minimize the importance of the serious study of Scripture and its applications to our life. However, our fervent hope is that we can all remain in fellowship and service together, through our discussions of this and many other difficult questions.

#### **2. What has our process brought to the life and ministry of the Southern Province?**

We have learned, as each generation of Christians must, that there is no topic that we cannot discuss in love with one another, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have proven, through smaller and larger groups, that we can love one another; we can listen and talk honestly, respectfully, humbly, and openly, about a difficult topic, and yet remain in relationship.

Many of our members have met many others and have come to see others in new ways. Some have knowingly encountered homosexual persons for the first time they were aware of.

Many have told their personal stories for the first time, in what could have been very risky circumstances.

Many have learned more about human sexuality through reading, watching videos, looking at websites, and our conversations.

Our work can provide a model for future conversations.

### **3. Knowing what we know now, what do we wish we had done differently?**

Three areas of our province were not effectively reached by our conversations. We were unable to schedule anything for the churches in Florida, despite repeated attempts; First Moravian in Georgia was not at a place in its own life that it could undertake these conversations; and we were unsuccessful in scheduling anything in the Charlotte area. We strongly encourage these areas to make use of the online resources for their own conversations, and we ask forgiveness for their inadvertent omission from this process.

We would like to have provided more resources and opportunities for in-depth study of the scriptures; not only the specific verses most often used in reference to conversations about same-sex relationships, but also the larger biblical witness about marriage and relationships, and the changing interpretations of scripture over the centuries.

### **Second, A Look at the Present and the Future**

Following all of these activities, a number of things remain clear.

The Moravian Church, Southern Province, like the worldwide Moravian Unity, is not of one mind with regard to homosexuality and the church.

The work of the Resolution 12 committee has not ever been about a problem to be solved, but rather a process to live through and to learn from.

The Moravian Church, as seen by outsiders, can and should remain a "both-and", not an "either-or", church. We have a 560-year history of remaining in unity in the face of many theological discussions and developments.

"Unity" is not the same as "uniformity". As we are not alike around our province in matters such as worship style, music preference, ready acceptance of women clergy, political opinions, and a multiplicity of social issues, we should not expect to be uniform in our perspective about a topic as potentially divisive as homosexuality. However, this lack of uniformity should not

destroy our unity as brothers and sisters in Christ, serving our Lord through the Moravian Church.

Our most important challenge for the future, therefore, remains this: to stay in community, to love one another, to continue in worship and prayer together, and to serve Christ together. The question then is simple: How shall we be one, truly united, in Christ, in the face of these differences between us?

All of us have received great blessing through our service on the Resolution 12 Steering Committee. We have grown in our love for one another, for Christ, and for the Moravian Church, Southern Province. We have been blessed through our participation in small-group conversations, meals, public events, worship, making the videos, and our committee meetings. As we come to the conclusion of our work together, we continue to pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the fellowship and guidance of the Holy Spirit will remain and abide with the Moravian Church, Southern Province, and all her members, now and forever.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

## **Part VI. Attachments**

1. Resource list
2. Covenant for Christian Conversation - Like-Minded Groups program
3. Public forum programs
4. Sample program for mixed-group conversations
5. Bishops' prayer
6. Leader's Guide for video series
7. Orders of worship from provincial worship services

## Appendix 1.

### Some Resources for a Study of Homosexuality and the Christian Church

#### *Moravian Sources (In chronological order)*

Issues of *The Hinge* after 1995 are available on line at:  
<http://moravianseminary.edu/moravian-studies/the-hinge.html>

*The Hinge*, vol. 1, no. 4 (April 1991). "Toward Healing and Wholeness: Personal Reflections on Sexuality and Spirituality."

*Moravian pastor Douglas Bauder tells the story of his sometimes painful and troubled journey toward realizing that he is gay, and presents his perspectives on his sexual nature and a brief survey of the scripture passages commonly cited regarding homosexuality. The 7 respondents – both pastors and lay persons – clearly present both sides of the debate, and Doug responds to each with courage and grace. (P)*

*The Hinge*, vol. 2, no. 2 (October 1991). "The Place and Authority of Scripture in the Moravian Church." *Moravian pastor Stephen O. Nicholas and lay author Mary Borhek each use the topic of homosexuality as a test case in discussing the role of the Bible in today's Moravian Church. Each presents his/her "side" in a well-reasoned argument, worth reading thoughtfully; perhaps the most helpful paragraph in the issue is that written in response by the late Bishop Warren Sautebin: "... in my years as a pastor and a church administrator, I have found that such matters as homosexuality – and heterosexuality – are best dealt with from the perspective of pastoral care rather than authoritarian scriptural interpretation. ... The subject of how Christians should deal with the subject of sexuality is more closely related to the compassionate nature of Jesus Christ than it is to any particular interpretation of a specific biblical passage. (p. 23) ... The Bible can speak to me with authority that is lodged in the God who speaks and not in the specific words in my leather-bound black book." (p. 24) (B)*

*The Hinge*, vol. 11, no. 2 (summer 2004): "Regarding the Interpretation of Resolution 6." *Glenn Herzog writes concerning the resolution, passed at the Northern Province Synod of 2002, welcoming homosexual persons and allowing them "to celebrate their lives as individuals and as couples completely within the bounds of the church and under the grace which our Creator imparts to all persons." His article concludes: "I think God may judge us less on its content [what the resolution says] than on the way we treated each other while we discussed it." The respondents are mostly in favor of the resolution; the editor says that several who were invited to respond chose not to, fearing that to speak out against a synod resolution might be harmful to their future within the church. (P)*

*The Church and Homosexuality: Two Views.* Originally submitted by a task force convened by the Eastern District executive Board as the result of action of the 2002 Synod of the Eastern District of the Moravian Church, Northern Province. Updated in 2011 as a result of action of the 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province.

*Clearly written, intended for group study, contains material for four different sessions (introduction; Issues for the Moravian Church; A Biblical View; A Scientific View). Each session has a brief essay on the "traditional" view, written by the Rev. Stephen Nicholas, and the "progressive" view, written by the Rev. Dorothy Burcaw. Each session also has devotions for opening and closing the group meeting. (P/B/T)*

*Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation.*

Formulated by Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission (2011), approved by Provincial Elders Conferences (2012). Available at  
[http://www.moravian.org/images/moravian/PDFs/Guiding\\_Principles\\_of\\_Biblical\\_Interpretation.pdf](http://www.moravian.org/images/moravian/PDFs/Guiding_Principles_of_Biblical_Interpretation.pdf) (B)

*The Hinge*, vol. 18 no. 1 (fall 2011): "A Model for Church Discernment When New Experiences Clash with Scripture and Tradition: The Narrative of Acts 10-15"

*A discussion of whether a scriptural model can provide us with a way forward in difficult conversations about controversial issues in the Moravian Church, specifically the question of whether the Moravian Church is fully welcoming to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons.*

*The Hinge*, special issue (June 2014): "Special Issue for the Northern Province Synod: Interpreting Scripture in the Moravian Church". View online at

[http://issuu.com/moravianseminary/docs/hinge\\_special\\_june2014?e=2975957/8151090](http://issuu.com/moravianseminary/docs/hinge_special_june2014?e=2975957/8151090)

*This special issue contains the Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation, along with two essays. First is Frank Crouch's "Applying the 'Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation' To Moravian Decisions Relating to Full Inclusion of Gay and Lesbian Persons in the Life of the Church". This is followed by Craig Atwood, "How Moravians Read the Bible in the Past". (B)*

Position Paper of the Theological Commission of the European-Continental Province of the Moravian Church Regarding the Blessing of Same-Gender Relationships. Translated by Paul Peucker.

<http://goo.gl/J3nEFw> . (P)

### Resources About Studying Scripture

David J. Lose, *Making Sense of Scripture*

*This is a seven-session study, designed for a class or group, the purpose of which is to give the class participants some "tools" and understanding for how to read the Bible effectively. The study includes a book for participants (with an introduction, seven primary chapters, and a short conclusion); the expectation is that class members will read the chapter before coming to class. The study also includes a leader's guide with suggestions for how to structure the class sessions and some specific activities; and also a DVD with a video introduction intended for the leader, and an 8-to 10-minute introduction to each session which may be used in the class. This study could help members of a class or congregation gain common ground for future Bible studies, both as individuals and as classes. The leader's guide, participants' book, and DVD are all available in the BCM Resource Center.*

Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You should Read the Bible* (Zondervan Press, 2008).

*This book is a very good, deliberately nonthreatening presentation of what the author calls a "third way" of reading and interpreting the Bible between literal fundamentalists and anything goes liberals. He uses the issue of women in ministry to demonstrate his approach, but lightly touches upon premarital sex and homosexuality. It would be a good first book for a group of folks to read and discuss before talking about homosexuality because his points will resonate with their unspoken, perhaps unrealized, experience of reading and interpreting scripture.*

### Booklets and Books About Homosexuality and the Church (In alphabetical order by author's last name)

Leroy Aarons, *Prayers for Bobby* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1995).

*A moving story of the struggle of a family of deep faith, when their young son Bobby "comes out" to them as gay. Told from the mother's perspective, with quotations from Bobby's journal, found in his possessions after his suicide. (See Lifetime movie by the same name.)*

J. Neil Alexander, *This Far by Grace: A Bishop's Journey Through Questions About Homosexuality* (Cowley Publications, 2003).

*This is a short and very readable account of Neil Alexander's personal reflections on homosexuality and the church, through his personal journey from exclusion to acceptance. He reviews briefly each of the standard*

*scripture passages used to argue that homosexuality is sinful. Many will remember that Neil was involved in the youth group at Home Moravian in the 1960's. (B/P)*

Mark Achtemeier, *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage* (Westminster John Knox, 2014).

*In the 1990's Achtemeier was, in his own words, "a conservative church activist working hard to defend the 'traditional' teaching of [the PCUSA] that was condemning homosexual practice.... The passage of fourteen years found me working to repeal the ban on gay ordination I had once helped put in place." (p. xi) He has come to recognize that "God's blessing is available to same-gender relationships just as much as to heterosexual ones" (p. xii). He himself has been married for 32 years.*

*His journey began with friendships with gay persons seeking to follow Jesus, and seeing the harsh toll it took on their emotional and spiritual health. He identifies his writing as "a spiritual travelogue" – not a scholarly survey, but rather beginning with what he saw in people's lives that made him question the traditional teaching. He recognized the pitfalls of the "fragment method" of Biblical interpretation – taking selected verses and generalizing from them for all circumstances and for all times; then he put these verses up against the broader message of scripture, and his question, then, became how to correct the understanding of scripture, not just to throw it out.*

*This book has a book study available for free download, divided into four sessions (could be more or less); and he suggests gathering a diverse group so the study doesn't "degenerate into an exercise in gathering ammunition for one's position" (book study, p. 2) (Available in BCM Resource Center.) (P/B)*

David L. Balch, *Homosexuality, Science, and the 'Plain Sense' of Scripture* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000).

*This is a series of essays by theologians, pastoral and New Testament professors on the topic, with a variety of views presented. More "scholarly" in style than many of the other resources, this is a resource for those wanting to explore the differences of viewpoint among theologians. (T)*

John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 1980)

*This is a very large work (424 pages including indexes) is a study of the history of attitudes toward homosexuality in the Christian west from the beginning of the Christian era to the 14th century. More a social history than a study of homosexuality per se, the author is opening a new field of scholarship in looking at the history of tolerance using homosexuality as a "test case". Full of good information and analysis; has lots of footnotes; still very readable for those who want to "go deeper" into history. (T)*

Rosaria Champagne Butterfield, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Crown & Covenant Publications, 2012).

*The author, a successful tenured English professor, describes her journey through what she describes as a "train wreck" in her life -- conversion to Christianity. This process of conversion included the transformation of her whole life, including her sexuality, and she moved from same-sex partnerships through celibacy into marriage with a man with whom she has raised several adopted and foster children. She is very honest about the difficulties she faced and the compassionate care she received from Christians throughout the years, and she explores diverse aspects of her life -- both her life in activism in the academic and gay community, and later on, the blessings and challenges of home-schooling her children and life as a pastor's wife. A thought-provoking account of a spiritual odyssey, very well written and compelling. (Available in BCM Resource Center)*

Ann Thompson Cook, *And God Loves Each One* (www.manyvoices.org, 2nd ed., 2004).

*This is a 24-page booklet subtitled "A Resource for Dialogue About Sexual Orientation", and thus a good introduction to the topic. Sections include a view of sexuality as one of God's good gifts; some "frequently-asked questions" about sexual orientation; a brief overview of scripture as speaking of love, not condemnation; and some short vignettes of actual experiences of gay and lesbian people in the church and in the world. (P)*

Beth Ann Gaede, ed., *Congregations Talking About Homosexuality* (Alban Institute, 1998).

*This is a very helpful book, presenting a variety of guidelines for discussion and actual congregational case studies. Each chapter brings up considerations valuable in structuring a discussion or study so that it might result in building up the body of Christ rather than being an attempt to "win" from one "side" or the other. (P)*

David P. Gushee, *Changing Our Mind* (Read the Spirit Books, second edition, 2015)

*This is a very readable, not-very-long book about how this evangelical ethicist admits he was wrong on the LGBT issue and how he thinks the church needs to reframe its dialogue.*

Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality* (Zondervan, 2010).

*This is a deeply moving, intensely personal account of Hill's struggle with his homosexual orientation in light of his Christian faith. He never wavers from the conviction that homosexual practice is a sin, and he is deeply committed to his faith; yet he struggles with loneliness and the sense that something is "wrong" with him. A compelling read, this short book gives insight into the spiritual journey of those of homosexual orientation who embrace celibacy. (P/T) (Available in BCM Resource Center)*

Bruce Hilton, *Can Homophobia Be Cured? Wrestling with Questions that Challenge the Church* (Abingdon Press, 1992).

*A compassionate, very readable, brief survey of the question of homosexuality and the church; a good introduction to the questions. The author treats homophobia – the fear/revulsion many heterosexuals experience towards homosexual persons – as a reaction as significant, and harmful, as sexism and racism. Chapter titles are: Asking the Right Questions; A Question About Feelings; What Do We Know About Gay People? What Does the Bible Say? What Does the Church Say? What Is Our Ministry to Gay People? Can Homophobia Be Cured? (P)*

Diane Lipsett, "Sexuality and the Church: A Conversation about the Bible, Ethics, and Communities of Interpretation".

Available online at Alliance of Baptists website at <http://baptistnews.com/ministry/organizations/item/7804-alliance-of-baptists-sunday-explores-sexuality> (follow the link study in the second paragraph).

*A study of biblical passages that seem to treat same-sex sexuality, exploring them for their relevance to contemporary questions about the church and sexuality, within the context of principles or guidelines or approach to biblical interpretation. (B/T)*

William Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament: Understanding the Key Texts* (Westminster John Knox, 2010).

*This is a more scholarly, "neutral" book that draws from what we know of the Ancient Near East as well as the opinions of other scholars, about what the New Testament actually has to say about human sexuality. The author strives for balance, and deals with passages not only concerned with same sex relations, but also divorce, marriage and the submission of women. A significant merit of this book is that he takes the scripture with utmost seriousness, looking not for support for any particular "position" but rather for what it would have meant to the original writers/hearers: "The focus ... is not how we might apply these texts today, but what they meant in their own day." (p. 7) (B)*

Andrew Marin, *Love Is an Orientation* (InterVarsity Press, 2009)

*The author refers to himself as a "one-time Bible-banging homophobe" (p. 137), who now asks the church "to leave the judging to God, to leave the convicting to the Holy Spirit, and to embrace the orientation of love" (p. 149). He seems to imply that the ultimate goal for a GLBT person is to change – that "straight" is the ideal, the goal, and that being a GLBT person is sin. Too often he refers to "GLBT persons" and "Christians" as if the two are mutually exclusive categories. All of his references to Bible commentaries are the more conservative ones – InterVarsity Press, Zondervan, John Stott. He makes a lot of references to the Marin Foundation, which urges conversation between "Christians" and "GLBT persons". The Marin*

*Foundation website, however, is useful in that it gives a bibliography of resources on sexuality – identified as “conservative” or “progressive”. (B/P)*

David G. Myers and Letha Dawson Scanzoni, *What God Has Joined Together: The Christian Case for Gay Marriage* (HarperOne, 2005).

*The two authors each started with the same assumptions – that “sexual orientation is a moral choice, and that the Bible resoundingly condemns homosexuality” (p. 182); each began their journey to their current position in favor of marriage equality through personal relationships with people in whom the Spirit of Christ was clear and who held other views. This isn’t a “gay marriage” book – it’s a pro-marriage book. The authors do examine Scripture, but not only that – they look at the case for marriage in terms of the well-being of individuals, children, and society. They review the current scientific thinking on sexual orientation (remember, the book is 10 years old) and sociological studies on changing attitudes over the past now 35 years. The book includes discussion questions for each chapter. (P)*

\*Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1978, revised and updated 1994).

*The two authors explore the question of homosexuality in the church with such topics as stigma and stereotyping; a review of scriptural passages often quoted in discussions of homosexuality; scientific research; and the continuing challenge for the Christian church in America. This book is the outcome of more than twenty years of research and study. Very readable, and a good introduction to all the issues. (P)*

\*Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow? Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate* (InterVarsity Press, 1995).

*This is a compassionate and readable presentation of the main traditional argument that the Bible clearly states homosexuality is sinful behavior. Because the book is dated, what it says about the health effects of homosexuality is not universally held by scientists today. (B)*

Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality* (Augsburg Fortress, 1984).

*While this book is 30 years old, it remains a most helpful resource, with the apt subtitle “Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate”. Scroggs writes that his purpose is “to make it as clear as possible what are the issues in the use of the bible in Christian debates about the acceptance of homosexuals” The book includes a lot of information about the culture surrounding early Christianity – looking at the model(s) of same-sex relationships that would have been known by the New Testament writers. Scroggs recognizes that the texts speak forthrightly against same-sex behavior, but argues that the model known to these writers was that of pederasty – an unequal relationship between an older man and a youth – not at all the kind of relationship of mutual caring, respect, and equality envisioned today. Scroggs concludes, therefore, that these specific texts do not give guidance to Christians today facing the question of homosexuality in the church, because they are speaking to a completely different model, and thus the cultural context is totally dissimilar. (B)*

Marion L. Soards, *Scripture & Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today* (Westminster John Knox, 1995).

*This is a brief and very readable summary of the traditional biblical arguments against the church softening its position on the sinfulness of homosexuality. This book will be particularly helpful for those who do not understand the interpretive lens of more conservative biblical scholars. (Available in BCM Resource Center) (B)*

Eve Tushnet, *Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith* (Ave Maria Press, 2014)

*Written by a lesbian who acknowledges and practices celibacy as the teaching of the Catholic Church for homosexual persons, this book is a good resource to all who are learning how to live their vocation – their “unique call from God to love and serve others and to receive their love.” An honest portrayal of the*

*author's own experiences, this is an inspiring book for anyone to read, regardless of their sexual orientation or their perspective on homosexuality and the church. (B/P/T) (Available in BCM Resource Center)*

Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (Convergent Books © Matthew Vine, 2014).

*The subtitle goes farther than many of our members may be ready to trust – is there a Biblical case in support of same-sex relationships? Don't let this title put you off, however; this is a deeply personal, yet very well researched and documented, study of scripture and homosexuality. Vines reviews the literature of both "affirming" and "non-affirming" writers. He writes that he holds "what is often called a 'high view' of the Bible", believing that "all of scripture is inspired by God and authoritative for [his] life" (p. 2). He deals compassionately with his own cognitive dissonance, and that of his father, in facing his own identity as a gay man while holding this high view of the Bible, and his upbringing with the "traditional" interpretation of Scripture regarding homosexuality.*

*Read this well-written book to follow one man's journey through faithful study of scripture, Christian history, ancient Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern culture, and science, to try to discover if he could reconcile his identity as a gay man with his identity as a "theologically conservative Christian". (BCM Resource Center) (B)*

Ken Wilson, *A Letter to My Congregation* (Read the Spirit Books, 2014)

*Ken Wilson is founding pastor of the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, MI. He sees the question of homosexuality in the church primarily as a pastoral issue: "is the Bible addressing modern-day monogamous gay unions at all? If the answer to that question is unclear, how are we to apply the prohibitions to gay people who are willing to practice lifelong fidelity with a same-sex partner?" (p. 79)*

*He suggests a "third way" between what he calls the "code phrase" options of "open-affirming" and "love the sinner, hate the sin", both of which treat the question as settled. He calls for "unity by virtue of a shared experience of a common core", citing Romans 14-15, saying this is a "disputable matter" (pp. 94-104). His view seems to mesh with Unity Synod's statement that this question "does not rise to the level of 'Jesus is Lord'," and seems to go well with our sense of essentials, ministerials, and incidentals. He asks both sides to leave the judging to God, and to welcome one another, embrace one another, as God has embraced us. (P / T)*

Walter Wink, ed., *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches* (Fortress Press, 1999).

*A collection of brief, very readable essays from various writers, lay and clergy, in favor of full inclusion of homosexual persons. This may be a very good introduction to the questions for someone just beginning to explore the topic. (P / T)*

Christopher Yuan and Angela Yuan, *Out of a Far Country* (Waterbrook Press, 2011).

*A deeply moving story of a gay man's journey from a life of promiscuous sex and drug dealing, through prison, to faith; and his mother's concurrent journey from judgment to healing love. (P) (BCM Resource Center)*

#### Web sites

[www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2013/june/alan-chambers-apologizes-to-gay-community-exodus.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2013/june/alan-chambers-apologizes-to-gay-community-exodus.html)

*The founder of Exodus International, the organization dedicated to "curing" those of homosexual orientation, apologizes for the suffering caused so many by these attempts.*

[www.glad.org/uploads/docs/cases/gill-v-office-of-personnel-management/2009-11-17-doma-aff-herek.pdf](http://www.glad.org/uploads/docs/cases/gill-v-office-of-personnel-management/2009-11-17-doma-aff-herek.pdf)

*"Expert Affidavit of Gregory M. Herek, Ph.D." GLAD, Nov. 13, 2009. In this professional testimony by professor of psychology Dr. Gregory M. Herek, he summarize the current state of scientific and professional knowledge about several issues relevant to sexual orientation and marriage.*

[www.reformationproject.org](http://www.reformationproject.org):

*A quote from this site: "The Reformation Project exists to train Christians to support and affirm lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Through building a deep grassroots movement, we strive to create an environment in which Christian leaders will have the freedom to take the next steps toward affirming and including LGBT people in all aspects of church life."*

<http://jonathanmerritt.religionnews.com/2014/08/11/third-way-christians-gay-issues/>

*A conversation from Religion News Service with Jonathan Merritt, who recommends creating a gracious space for all in our congregations, a middle ground between what have been generally seen as the two sides of the question – "open and affirming" vs. "traditional" views of homosexuality.*

<http://spaciousfaith.com/2011/03/12/ask-the-pastor-about-homosexuality/>

*A blog from a pastor of a church that welcomes gay and lesbian people, in response to the question of how she reconciles her views on homosexuality with what the Bible says.*

<http://rachelheldevans.com/blog/reformation-project-gay-christian-network-conferences>

*This website presents information about conferences helping us to learn from gay and lesbian Christians*

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=710661775707756>

*A five-minute video presenting brief self-introductions of persons in the church who have differing sexual orientations.*

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/changing-our-mind>

*A review of "Changing Our Mind" by David Gushee; this extended article presents a clear refutation of many of the positions taken, with regard to scripture, by those who advocate for affirmation of committed same-sex unions.*

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/june-web-only/why-matthew-vines-is-wrong-about-bible-same-sex-relationships.html?paging=off>

*By Christopher Yuan (see "Out of a Far Country", above, this review of Matthew Vines' "God and the Gay Christian" argues that Vines does not adhere to the high view of scripture that he professes.*

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/gay-is-not-the-new-black>

*Written in support of the traditional view of marriage as between a man and a woman, this article refutes the thinking that same-sex marriage is the next step in civil rights.*

<https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/faith-culture/16805-gay-celibate-christians-easily-misunderstood>

*A brief introduction to the evangelical and Catholic Christians who identify as homosexual but embrace chastity as God's call.*

<http://www.dragonlordsnet.com/abomination.htm>

*Linda A. Malcor, Putting Abominations in Perspective. This article by freelance writer and researcher Linda A. Malcor takes the word "abomination" as found in the Revised Standard Version and looked at all 67 instances of its use (65 in the Old Testament, 2 in the New Testament). Dr. Malcor does not claim to be a biblical scholar; her degrees are in English and folklore/mythology.*

## Movies

*Coming Out, Coming In: Faith, Identity, and Belonging* (2005)

This documentary gives voice to gay and lesbian Christians who have struggled to reconcile faith with sexual orientation.

*Fish Can't Fly* (2005)

Taking a secular point of view, *Fish Can't Fly* explores the lives of gay men and women of faith as they recall their journeys to put their sexuality and spirituality in harmony.

*Fish out of Water* (2009)

*Fish out of Water* tackles the seven Bible verses used to condemn homosexuality and justify marriage discrimination. This feature documentary uses humor and original animation to make a traditionally complex and controversial topic accessible to those who don't like talking about religion and sexuality.

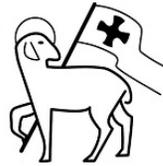
*For the Bible Tells Me So* (2007)

This film reconciles homosexuality and Biblical scripture, supporting the position that religious anti-gay bias is based almost solely upon a misinterpretation of the Bible. Through the experiences of five very normal, Christian, American families - including those of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson - discover how people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child or family member. Directed by Daniel G. Karlslake (Atticus Group, 2007)

*Prayers for Bobby* (2013)

This deeply moving film, made for TV by Lifetime Network, tells the story of the struggle of a family of deep faith when their young son "comes out" to them, and later commits suicide. Based on the book by Leroy Aarons.

**Appendix 2. Liturgy and covenant for Christian conversation, like-minded groups.**



**Moravian Church in America**  
*Southern Province*

**Conversations About Homosexuality in the Church**

**Opening worship and covenant**

Almighty God, you are the one who called this universe into being. Out of nothing you created everything that is.

**By your power you hold together all space and time and substance.**

By your hand alone, Creator God, the inanimate elements became alive so that we could live and move and have our being.

**We celebrate life, the precious life you have given us, and we celebrate that unity of mind and emotions, of body and soul, that you want us to enjoy and share with each other.**

We rejoice in the centrality of Jesus Christ in all your works, for he was with you from the very beginning, and is supreme over all creation.

**We praise you that Christ is before all things, and that in him all things hold together, especially our very fragile, vulnerable, and often broken lives.**

GRACEHAM (581 K; MBW 670)

'Tis a pleasant thing to see  
brothers in the Lord agree,  
sisters of a God of love  
live as they shall live above,  
acting each a Christian part,  
one in word and one in heart.

Where divine affection lives,  
there the Lord his blessing gives;  
there his will on earth is done;  
there his heav'n is half begun.  
Great Example from above,  
teach us all like you to love.

We thank you, gracious God, for establishing the church as a single body of interdependent members, each having a place and purpose.

**We know that we need each other, and are called to appreciate the great variety of gifts you have given us to use.**

Help us to rejoice with those who are feeling joy and delight.

**Help us to sing with those who are singing your love and praise.**

Help us to taste the agony of those who are hurting.

**Help us to share the burden of those who are in distress.**

Take away jealousy and resentment from our hearts when we see others achieving success.

**Fill us with that spirit of unity in Christ that lets us see and feel and know that we all belong to you through the grace we have received.**

Teach us to know and love the world-wide church called out of all peoples and nations. Make visible the unity that you desire as we express a spirit of reconciliation in all our relationships. Show us that we are part of the one and only body of Jesus Christ, unified by faith, scattered for witness and service. Lead us to appreciate the richness of our diversity and your creative power at work in our various traditions and customs. Make us all one with you by the inspiration and guidance of your Spirit.

**Lead us into lives worthy of our calling in Christ, with all lowliness, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another in love, and eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We pray for this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### **A Covenant for Christian Conversation**

As we meet here today to have conversation about homosexuality and the church, we join in covenant with one another before God.

**We covenant to exercise the Golden Rule in all our conversation, following Jesus' admonition: "Here," he said, "is a simple rule of thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative, and do it for them." ("The Message" translation of Matthew 7:12)**

When expressing feelings, thoughts or opinions, we know that we can only truly speak for our own experience. We will use "I" statements rather than "you" statements.

**We will accept responsibility for our own feelings and our own convictions and claim them as our own.**

We covenant to give everyone the opportunity to speak and be heard regardless of whether we agree with his or her opinion, perspective, or theology. If we have been heard, the convener may ask us to yield the floor before speaking again in order for everyone to have a chance to speak.

**We covenant to listen to one another without interrupting.**

Following Christ's teaching in Matthew 18, we speak directly with a sister or brother with whom we disagree, instead of talking about our disagreement with them behind their backs.

**We covenant to be honest with each other and "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). We cannot choose either truth or love without the other. Balancing truth and love together will bring wholeness to our discussions.**

Our covenant expands beyond this day's meeting. We will respect the contributions of everyone who is here, and we will not disclose their names or repeat their comments to anyone.

**When we leave this place,  
I understand that I am free to tell anyone what I said;  
I agree not to tell what anyone else said;  
I will not disclose the names of anyone else who was here today.**

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

**Throughout this time of discernment in our province, we will continually ask ourselves, Can we truly say, "Come, Lord Jesus, our Guest to be"?**

Come, Lord Jesus, our Guest to be,

**And bless these gifts bestowed by Thee. Amen.**

### **Conversation around three questions**

1. What brought you to the perspective you now hold? As a follow-up, would you care to say anything more about your perspective?
2. What would you like to ask someone who holds a different perspective? As a follow-up, what can you learn from those who hold other perspectives?
3. When we are together with people with diverse viewpoints, what will help make the conversation fruitful? What guidance can you give the Steering Committee in our planning?

### **Closing remarks and prayer**

*Know that you are invited to contact any of these Steering Committee members with comments about today's meeting or other suggestions you would like to make.*

<i>Jeff Carter</i>	<i>336-671-6812</i>	<i>pastorjeff@yadtel.net</i>
<i>Joyce Carter</i>	<i>336-707-4859</i>	<i>utopiac13@gmail.com</i>
<i>Betty Helms</i>	<i>336-509-1173</i>	<i>bettyhelms@hotmail.com</i>
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<i>Nola Reed Knouse</i>	<i>336-813-3758</i>	<i>nrknouse@triad.rr.com</i>
<i>Bob Sawyer</i>	<i>336-727-1387</i>	<i>rsawyertz@gmail.com</i>
<i>Craig Troutman</i>	<i>919-787-4034</i>	<i>craig@raleighmoravian.org</i>
<i>Steve Wilson</i>	<i>704-301-6365</i>	<i>stevewilson313@gmail.com</i>

Appendix 3a. October 4, 2015, Public Forum program



Moravian Church in America  
*Southern Province*

**'Tis a Pleasant Thing to See:  
Fostering Respectful Conversation  
about Homosexuality and the Church**

Sunday, October 4, 2015, 4:00 p.m.  
Shirley Recital Hall  
Elberson Fine Arts Center  
Salem College

Program

*A word about our worship*

*Brother Sam Gray*

Hymn

ST. THEODULPH (151 G)

God is my strong salvation, no enemy I fear;  
God hears my supplication, dispelling all my care;  
if God, my head and master, defend me from above,  
what pain or what disaster can part me from God's love?

The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

**Let us love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.**

We know God as Father, who seeks loving relationships with all whom he has created.

**Like a mother, God has nurtured us all our days and has been near in time of trouble.**

Praise the Lord, and do not forget how kind God is:

**Who forgives our sins and redeems us from the grave.**

Who blesses us with steadfast love and tender mercy,

**Who fills our lives with good things, so that our youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

ST. THEODULPH (151 G)

I fully am persuaded and joyfully declare  
I'm never left unaided, my Father hears my prayer;  
his comforts never fail me, he stands at my right hand;  
when tempests fierce assail me, they're calm at his command.

We know God as Jesus Christ, the Word who became a human being and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

**No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is one with God and is at the Father's side, he has made God known.**

God created the whole universe through him and for him. Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place.

**Jesus was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death, even death on the cross.**

For this reason God raised him to the highest place above, and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.

**And so, in honor of the name of Jesus, all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

ST. THEODULPH (151 G)

The ground of my profession is Jesus and his blood;  
he gives me the possession of everlasting good.  
To me his Holy Spirit speaks many a precious word  
of rest to one who's seeking a refuge in the Lord.

We know God as the Holy Spirit, who reveals the truth about God.

**The world cannot receive the Spirit because it cannot see or know him. But we know him, because the Spirit remains with us and is in us.**

God's Spirit joins with our spirits to declare that we are God's children.

**The Holy Spirit is the helper who stays with us forever.**

Because we are God's children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out: Father, my Father.

**Like a mighty wind, like a blazing fire, the Holy Spirit comes upon us and fills us with power, making us witnesses for Christ, to the neighborhood, to the nation, and to the ends of the earth.**

May we have power to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, and so be filled with all the fullness of God.

**It is through Christ that all of us are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.**

A time for speaking with God through prayer

Brother Graham Rights

A time for listening to God through the reading of God's word: Ephesians 2:11-22

Brother Lane Sapp

CASSEL (167 A)

Christian hearts, in love united, seek alone in Jesus rest;  
has he not your love excited? Then let love inspire each breast.  
Members -- on our Head depending, lights -- reflecting him, our Sun,  
brethren -- his commands attending, we in him, our Lord, are one.

Come then, come, O flock of Jesus, covenant with him anew;  
unto him, who conquered for us, pledge we love and service true;  
and should bonds of love which join you lose their strength and prove unreal,  
drive yourselves in prayer to Jesus till he turns love's bonds to steel.

Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, since as members of one body we were called to peace. And let us be thankful.

**Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly as we teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. Whatever we do, therefore, whether in word or deed, let us do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Presentations

Brother Wayne Burkette, moderator

The Rev. Dr. Susan Parker  
The Rev. John C. Rankin

### **Break**

During the break you may stand up and stretch, walk around a little bit, or take the opportunity to write down a question for our presenters. These questions should not be argumentative or personal in nature, but rather should be for clarification of the concepts presented by the speakers. Please hand your written question to a member of the Steering Committee; committee members will gather the questions and give them to the moderator. Brother Burkette will ask the questions of the speakers.

We may not get to every question today. Please be assured that the Steering Committee will keep these questions and consider them carefully in planning for future conversations.

Questions and Answers

A Call to Continued Worship

CASSEL (167 A)

Grant, Lord, that with thy direction, "Love each other," we comply,  
aiming with unfeigned affection thy love to exemplify;  
let our mutual love be glowing; thus the world will plainly see  
that we, as on one stem growing, living branches are in thee.

O that such may be our union as thine with the Father is,  
and not one of our communion e'er forsake the path of bliss;  
may our light break forth with brightness, from thy light reflected shine;  
thus the world will bear us witness that we, Lord, are truly thine.

Jesus gave his followers a new commandment. He gave it to his disciples and he gives it to us. This new commandment is this: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples."

**We want to be Jesus' disciples!**

But to love one another seems very difficult. Talking about it is good. Singing about it is wonderful!

**But to live it is not always so easy.**

Paul and Peter made it a little easier for us by giving us a practical list of "one anothers" that we can understand, that we should live by, and that help us to follow Jesus' command to love one another.

**Help us, Lord, to hear the words written by your servants to your first followers and to us.  
Remind us that we are your body - that you have given to us the responsibility to carry out the ministry that you began.**

Be devoted to one another. Be of the same mind toward one another. Pray for one another. Fellowship with one another. Practice hospitality one to another.

**We are one body. We have been called by one Lord, and we share one faith, one baptism, and one God.**

Don't judge one another. Don't speak evil against one another. Don't grumble against one another. Confess your faults one to another.

**If we follow these commands we know that our own life will be happier, our relationships with each other will be healthier, and we will be brought closer together in our worship, fellowship and service for you.**

Depend on one another. Rejoice with one another. Greet one another. Accept one another. Weep with one another. Serve one another. Forgive one another. Care for one another. Bear one another's burdens.

**If love is not practical, it is only a dream.**

We love one another when we serve, greet, accept, and forgive each other.

**We love one another when we take the time to be together, to rejoice together and to cry together.**

We love one another when we tear down the barriers that have been built up between us.

**We love one another when we get to a greater level of knowing each other, and caring for each other.**

Be kind to one another. Encourage one another. Outdo one another in showing honor.

**Lord, help us to love one another in all the many ways that have been put before us.**

**Give us the will to love each other in the way you would have us love: the way you love us.**

BEACH SPRING

Lord, whose love in humble service bore the weight of human need,  
who upon the cross, forsaken, worked your mercy's perfect deed:  
we, your servants, bring the worship not of voice alone, but heart,  
consecrating to your purpose ev'ry gift which you impart.

Still your children wander homeless; still the hungry cry for bread;  
still the captives long for freedom; still in grief we mourn our dead.  
As you, Lord, in deep compassion healed the sick and freed the soul,  
by your Spirit send your power to our world to make it whole.

Called by worship to your service forth in your dear name we go,  
to the child, the youth, the aged, love in living deeds to show;  
hope and health, good will and comfort, counsel, aid, and peace we give,  
that your servants, Lord, in freedom may your mercy know and live.

Now to God, who by God's power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine --  
to God be glory in the church through Jesus Christ forever and ever.

**Amen.**

Lord, whose love in humble service, © Oxford University Press. Reprinted under OneLicense.net S-916055  
Alternate translation of verse 2 of Christian Hearts in Love United by C. Daniel Crews and Nola Reed Knouse

### *About the Speakers*

The Rev. Dr. Susan Parker is a North Carolina native, having grown up in the western part of the state. She completed high school at Salem Academy, where she was able to learn quite a bit about Moravians, and develop a lifelong appreciation for lovefeasts! After years of struggle with her sexual orientation, she came out publicly in 1995, and went on to answer a call to ministry and advocacy, becoming a member of the inaugural class of the Wake Forest University Divinity School. Upon graduation, she was ordained by Wake Forest Baptist Church, where she served as a minister for 12 years. During her time of service, she completed a Doctor of Ministry program at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Susan has moved her ministry to the arena of social work, and recently completed a Masters of Social Work through UNC-Chapel Hill. She currently serves as coordinator of the Relatives as Parents Program, or RAPP, a program provided by the Forsyth County Department of Social Services, which works with relatives who have taken over caregiving for another relative's child. She is married, and is gladly helping raise two grandsons who ages 7 and 5. She'll be glad to show you pictures of them after today's forum.

The Rev. John C. Rankin is President of the Theological Education Institute (TEI), International (teii.org), which he founded in 1986, following and during his years in pastoral and pro-life ministry. He is a West Hartford, Connecticut native, grew up in an agnostic Unitarian context within the heaviest Jewish population in New England, before he encountered the living presence of the one true Creator, and converted to a biblical and evangelical faith as a 14-year old in 1967. He is a graduate of South Kent School, Denison University (B.A. History), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Harvard Divinity School (Th.M. Ethics and Public Policy); and is pursuing an M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Political Theology, on Human Freedom, at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Appendix 3b. January 19, 2016, Public Forum program



Moravian Church in America  
*Southern Province*

**'Tis a Pleasant Thing to See:  
Fostering Respectful Conversation  
about Homosexuality and the Church**

Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 7:00 p.m.  
New Philadelphia Moravian Church

Welcome

Opening Worship

The Rt. Rev. D. Wayne Burkette

*In praise of word and Word*

In spirit and in truth, let us offer our worship to God.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls us His Church into being so that we may serve Him on earth until he comes. This call is the source of our being and the inspiration of our service. (Ground of the Unity)

**We give thanks to the Lord for His call to be His Church and to serve Him in faith, love and hope.**

In light of divine grace, we recognize ourselves to be a Church of sinners who require forgiveness daily through the mercy of God, who redeems us from our isolation and unites us into a living Church of Jesus Christ. (Ground of the Unity)

HUS (22 F)

The word of God, which ne'er shall cease,  
proclaims free pardon, grace, and peace,  
salvation shows in Christ alone,  
the perfect will of God makes known.

O God, in whom our trust we place,  
we thank you for your word of grace;  
help us its precepts to obey  
till we shall live in endless day.

We remember with gratitude how the Lord led the Israelites out of Egypt, humbling them with hunger in the wilderness and then feeding them with manna, in order to help them understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deut. 8:2-3)

**For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)**

The Triune God as revealed in Holy Scripture is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life. We recognize the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel, and we see our primary mission and our reason for being to consist in bearing witness to this joyful message. (Ground of the Unity)

**We give thanks to the Lord for the Word of the Cross and pray for power to live in that Word.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. (John 1:1, 3)

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:4)**

MUNICH

O word of God incarnate, O wisdom from on high,  
O truth unchanged, unchanging, O light of our dark sky:  
we praise you for the radiance that from the scripture's page,  
a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:14, 16-17)

**We profess Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)**

Jesus promised us an Advocate – the Spirit of truth - to be with us forever, to abide with us and in us. And Jesus said, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you." (John 14:16, 26)

**We give thanks for the Holy Spirit – our Teacher, Guide and Comforter.**

So, let us open our minds and hearts to God's word in scripture and to God's Word in Jesus Christ through the indwelling of his Holy Spirit. This is our calling; this is our privilege; this is the unifying power of God, who joins us together mutually, so that knowing ourselves to be members of His body we become willing to serve each other. (Ground of the Unity)

**Thanks be to God!**

Meditation

The Rev. Dr. Worth Green

Moravian Interpretation of Scripture

The Rt. Rev. Samuel J. Gray

**Break**

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### A Call to Continued Worship

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ministry that you began.**

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BEACH SPRING

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by your Spirit send your power to our world to make it whole.

Called by worship to your service forth in your dear name we go,  
to the child, the youth, the aged, love in living deeds to show;  
hope and health, good will and comfort, counsel, aid, and peace we give,  
that your servants, Lord, in freedom may your mercy know and live.

Now to God, who by God's power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine --  
to God be glory in the church through Jesus Christ forever and ever.

**Amen.**

*This Is ...*

... one of a series of events planned by the Steering Committee for Resolution 12, which was approved by the Southern Province Synod of 2014, and called for a time of study and discernment regarding homosexuality and the church. Earlier events included conversations among people coming to the table with similar perspectives, and a public forum on October 4, 2015, featuring presentations by two theologians with differing perspectives. (The video of this event is available online, link from [www.mcsp.org](http://www.mcsp.org).)

*Thank You ...*

... to New Philadelphia Moravian Church and the Rev. Dr. Worth Green, for hosting this event, and to the Rev. Christy Clore, Director of Christian Education, for arranging child care to the bishops residing in the Southern Province, the Rt. Rev. D. Wayne Burkette, the Rt. Rev. Samuel J. Gray, the Rt. Rev. Graham H. Rights, and the Rt. Rev. Lane A. Sapp, for their leadership in this event

*Coming Next ...*

... are three identical opportunities to participate in a fellowship meal and conversation (You must sign up to attend!). These will take place on Sunday, January 24, 2016, at 5:30 p.m., at Rural Hall Moravian Church; Saturday, January 30, 2016, at 12:00 noon, at Kernersville Moravian Church; and Sunday, January 31, 2016, at 5:30 p.m., at New Philadelphia Moravian Church. There is no charge for the meal.

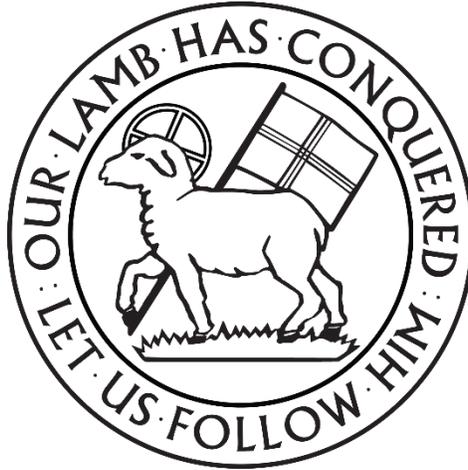
For more information, or to sign up for the meals, please visit [www.mcsp.org](http://www.mcsp.org) and click on "Resolution 12". You will find articles about what has already taken place, what is coming next, and helpful resources. Or you can contact Nola Knouse at 336-813-3758, or [nrknouse@triad.rr.com](mailto:nrknouse@triad.rr.com). Please plan to participate!

Resolution 12 Steering Committee members

Jeff Carter	336-671-6812	<a href="mailto:jeff@littlechurchonthelane.com">jeff@littlechurchonthelane.com</a>
Joyce Carter	336-707-4859	<a href="mailto:utopiac13@gmail.com">utopiac13@gmail.com</a>
Betty Helms	336-509-1173	<a href="mailto:bettyhelms@hotmail.com">bettyhelms@hotmail.com</a>
Greg Knouse	336-287-0809	<a href="mailto:flybyone@hotmail.com">flybyone@hotmail.com</a>
Nola Reed Knouse	336-813-3758	<a href="mailto:nrknouse@triad.rr.com">nrknouse@triad.rr.com</a>
Bob Sawyer	336-727-1387	<a href="mailto:rsawyertz@gmail.com">rsawyertz@gmail.com</a>
Craig Troutman	919-787-4034	<a href="mailto:craig@raleighmoravian.org">craig@raleighmoravian.org</a>
Steve Wilson	704-301-6365	<a href="mailto:stevewilson313@gmail.com">stevewilson313@gmail.com</a>

Appendix 4. Sample program for mixed-group conversations.

Order of Worship  
for a Time of Conversation



April 10, 2016

5:30 p.m.

Trinity Moravian Church  
Winston-Salem, NC



Order of Worship  
for a Time of Conversation

April 10, 2016

5:30 p.m.

Watchword for Sunday, April 10: Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke through his servant Moses. (1 Kings 8:56)

Doctrinal Text: The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.  
1 Thessalonians 5:24.

Hymn – May the Mind of Christ, My Savior

T. St. Leonards

May the mind of Christ my Savior  
live in me from day to day,  
by his love and pow'r controlling  
all I do and say.

May the peace of God my Father  
rule my life in ev'rything,  
that I may be calm to comfort  
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me  
as the waters fill the sea;  
him exalting, self abasing –  
this is victory.

As members of the body of Christ, we come this afternoon to have holy conversations, knowing that the Chief Elder is present with us as we share experiences, our understandings of Scripture and our views on homosexuality and the Church. Using the Apostle Paul's description of the mind of Christ, let us now prayerfully covenant to speak the truth in love, showing respect to each other and listening without judgment.

So (writes Paul), if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

**Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves.**

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

**But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of humanity.**

And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

**Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Let us now enter a time of conversation in the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Hymn – One Our Master, One Alone

T. Gaudeamus Pariter

One our Master, one alone, none but Christ as Lord we own;  
"brethren of his law" are we – "As I loved you, so love ye."  
Branches we in Christ, the Vine, living by his life divine;  
as the Father with the Son, so, in Christ, we all are one.

Closing Worship

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Lord Jesus Christ, Lord and Chief Elder of your body, the Church, we thank you for sitting at table with us in this time of conversation. For the gift of your peace which enables us to speak honestly and openly without fear, we give you thanks. For knitting us together in the one true faith despite our differences, and for the promise of your presence as we continue to discern your will for the church, we offer you both praise and thanksgiving. As we conclude this time together, hear us as we pray the words you once taught your disciples:

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn - Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

T. Sicilian Mariner's Hymn (16 L)

Lord, dismiss us with your blessing;  
fill our hearts with joy and peace.  
Let us each, your love possessing,  
triumph in redeeming grace.  
O, refresh us, O, refresh us;  
trav'ling through this wilderness.

Thanks we give and adoration  
for your gospel's joyful sound.  
May the fruits of your salvation  
in our hearts and lives abound.  
Ever faithful, ever faithful  
to your truth may we be found.

Benediction

**Appendix 5. Prayer written for the bishops and distributed at mixed-group conversations.**

Lord God, as your Son once sat at table with his disciples, gracing them with his presence, come now, by the power of your Spirit, and dwell with us. Guide our conversations in all the days to come. Help us to speak with an honesty that is gentle, forbearing one another, exercising compassion, kindness, meekness and patience in our discussion. Help us listen to each other without judgment, respecting the diversity of experience and understanding among us. More than anything, O God, help us in these moments to “put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony” despite our differences. These things we humbly ask in the Name of Him who binds us together, even Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Appendix 6.

**'Tis a Pleasant Thing to See:  
Congregational Conversations  
about Homosexuality and the Church**



**Leaders Guide to the Video Series**

**Preparations**

*There are four videos in this series. The ideal scenario is one in which you can devote about an hour to an hour and a half for each session – about 35 minutes to watch the video, a five-minute covenant and prayer, and 20-30 minutes of conversation. If you do not have that much time, then watch the video, and discuss it in the next session. In that case, you may want to invite your participants to watch it again on their home computers before coming back to discuss it – be sure to hand out slips of paper with the link to the video.*

*These conversations are best held in groups of 6 to 8 people, so that everyone has a chance to speak and everyone can be heard by the others in their group. Depending upon your setup, you may have everyone in a larger group to watch the video and then move to smaller groups; or you may be able to set them up in their groups and still have everyone able to see the video. Plan how you will do this before the gathering, so that your process is easy and smooth for the participants.*

*This is very important: Before you call the group to order and welcome everyone, be sure the technology is ready and working well. “Cue up” the video on the computer/screen so that all you have to do is click the “play” button, so that people don’t have to wait for the video to begin.*

*Also very important: it’s a good idea not to give them copies of the handout before they watch the video. You don’t want them to be reading it or preparing their answers to the questions during the video! If you will discuss it in a later gathering, don’t give out the handout until that later gathering.*

*Follow-up: After you’ve had your gatherings and conversations, the Steering Committee would very much appreciate hearing about it, as we prepare our report to the Provincial Elders’ Conference and Synod! What group(s) used the videos? What were their reactions? How many people participated? What can we all learn from your experience? Please email or write Nola Knouse, [nrknouse@triad.rr.com](mailto:nrknouse@triad.rr.com); 4281 Bower Lane, Winston-Salem, NC 27104, with your responses.*

**The Gathering Itself**

*To begin your program, first welcome everyone and invite them to find a seat. You may choose to read the Daily Text and/or have an opening hymn or prayer. Then read aloud the following introduction:*

Southern Province Synod Resolution 12 called for the province to “provide leadership, resources, and a process for a conversation about homosexuality in the church that includes diverse viewpoints, and opportunities for open and honest discussion, study and discernment. This process of dialogue and discernment should take into account similar efforts made, and decisions that have been or may be reached by our sister provinces within the Unity, as well as any actions of the 2014 Unity Board and 2016 Unity Synod.” Fulfilling that mandate of Synod, the Provincial Elders Conference appointed a Steering Committee in the summer of 2014, which has been studying, praying, and working actively ever since. As part of this process, the committee has produced four videos to help us engage in these conversations together.

***If you are watching the video AND discussion it today, continue by reading this aloud:***

Today we will watch a video, which lasts about 35 minutes, and then talk together. It's important for us all to remember that this is not a debate with "winners" and "losers", but rather we are here as Christian brothers and sisters talking together about a topic that has been difficult for many of us to grapple with. After we watch the video, we will begin our conversation with a prayer and a covenant. So let's get comfortable, be sure everyone can see the screen, and watch.

***If you watched the video in a prior session and are discussing it today, read this aloud instead:***

As we talk today about the video we watched last time, it's important for us all to remember that this is not a debate with "winners" and "losers", but rather we are here as Christian brothers and sisters talking together about a topic that has been difficult for many of us to grapple with.

*Guidelines for the conversation:*

- ❖ *Allow about 5 minutes for them to introduce themselves to each other in their small groups – even if they are members of the same church, don't assume everyone knows everyone! If you know they do, invite them to answer a question to each other, just to get them speaking to each other. Some examples:*
  - *What would you be doing if you weren't here at this gathering?*
  - *What's the best thing that happened to you this week (in one minute or less)?*
  - *Name a favorite song or hymn and why you like it.*
  - *(or some other such conversation-starter)*
- ❖ *Then – and not sooner! – pass out copies of the handout for this session. Be sure to share in the Covenant for Christian Conversation on the handout. You as the "leader" will read the regular-type words; everyone reads the bold-face type.*
- ❖ *Now invite them to begin discussing the questions. Ask them to be sure everyone in the group has a chance to speak, but assure them that no one should feel pressured to speak. Silence is absolutely OK!*
- ❖ *As leader, you should wander around and listen a little to each group. If you sense that someone is monopolizing the conversation in a group, step in and ask him/her if he/she might hold that thought for a few minutes, to see if someone else would like to say anything.*
- ❖ *Keep a close watch on the time so that the groups have a chance to address every question. For instance, if you've allowed 20 minutes for conversation, and there are 4 questions, then "cue" the groups to move on to the next question after about 3½ or 4 minutes (give them time to finish their sentence before having to move on!). Don't let the groups get "hung" on any one of the questions. The point is not to come to any conclusions or consensus, but simply to listen and speak as brothers and sisters.*
- ❖ *After your allotted time, invite them to share the Right Hand of Fellowship with those in their group. Then, with everyone standing, pray the Lord's Prayer together, and depart in peace.*

Appendix 7a. September 25, 2016, worship service



Moravian Church in America  
*Southern Province*

*Singstunde*

**The Call of Christ**

**September 25, 2016, 3:00 p.m.**  
**Fairview Moravian Church**  
The Rt. Rev. Graham H. Rights, *presiding*

PRELUDE: *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*

Arr. Albin C. Whitworth

Lewis Phillips, *organ*

(Standing)

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight,

**and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

HYMN 481, *Come Now and Sing*

FOREST GREEN

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

(Sitting)

**THE CALL TO FAITH**

There is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.**

Jesus said, "They who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

**Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'"**

When the son came to himself he said, "I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him,

**'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'"**

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion;

**he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.**

HYMN 765, *Come, You Sinners*

RESTORATION (ARISE)

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

**Indeed, God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. [John 3:16-17]**

HYMN 773, *And Can It Be That I Should Gain*

SAGINA

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved –

**and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing;

**it is the gift of God.**

HYMN 761, *Out of the Depths I Cry to You*

DE PROFUNDIS (132 E)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

**just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.**

He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

**In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us.**

HYMN 783, *Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound*

AMAZING GRACE

GENERAL LITURGY 5: *Grace*, pages 31-34

## THE CALL TO FOLLOW

Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me."

**And he got up, left everything, and followed him.**

HYMN 600, *Jesus Calls Us*

GALILEE

As Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen.

**And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.**

As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James, son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.

**Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.**

HYMN 611, *Two Fishermen*

LEAVE ALL THINGS

My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

**I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.**

HYMN 795, *Come, Faithful Shepherd, Bind Me*

REJOICE (151 I)

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

**For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.**

HYMN 758, *"Take Up Your Cross," the Savior Said*

BRESLAU

Jesus said to the young man, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven;

**then, come, follow me."**

HYMN 614, *Jesus, Master, Whose I Am*

GRACEHAM (581 K)

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,

**and I will give you rest.**

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;

**For I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.**

For my yoke is easy,

**and my burden is light.**

HYMN 606, *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*

THIRD MODE MELODY

### THOSE WHO ARE CALLED

Simeon took the child Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying,

**Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace  
according to your word:**

for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

**a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.**

Jesus said to the crowd, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

**Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.**

HYMN 781, *In Christ There Is No East or West*

MCKEE

## THE CALL TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you;

**Abide in my love.**

I give you a new commandment,

**that you love one another.**

Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,  
if you have love for one another.**

Above all, maintain constant love for one another,

**for love covers a multitude of sins.**

HYMN 673, *Christian Hearts in Love United*

CASSEL (167 A)

BIDDING PRAYER

(Standing)

HYMN 587, *Our Lamb Has Conquered*

OLD 124TH

BENEDICTION: (sung by all)

HYMN 832, *The Grace of Our Lord*

POSTLUDE: *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

Arr. Mary Ellen Kerrick

Appendix 7b. January 22, 2017, worship service



Moravian Church in America  
*Southern Province*

## A Service of Prayer and Discernment

January 22, 2017  
Clemmons Moravian Church  
The Rt. Rev. Lane A. Sapp, *presiding*

*Call on me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know - Jeremiah 33:3*

Prelude: *Amazing Grace*  
*Christian Hearts, in Love United*

Paul F. Knouse, Jr., *organ*

arr. Leland B. Sateren  
arr. Brian Henkelmann

+HYMN 535, *Joining our Voices*

BUNESSAN

### ADORATION

*In prayer we worship God.*

+The Litany

p.1

### CONFESSION

*In prayer we confess our sins before God, reaffirm our faith  
and receive assurance of our pardon.*

The Litany

pp.2-4

### THANKSGIVING

*In prayer we praise God for his goodness.*

The Gloria Patri

bottom of p. 3

### SUPPLICATION

*In prayer we "supplicate", asking God for help. We intercede for ourselves  
and others, seeking God's will, strength and guidance.*

*There are three types of supplication expressed in the Litany:*

*In the "From" petitions or "Deprecations" on page 5 we pray for deliverance from all forms of sin, error and evil.*

*In the "By" petitions or "Obsecrations" on pages 5-6 we ask for God's blessing and comfort through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

*In the "Intercessions" on page 7 we intercede for ourselves, others and the Church Universal.*

*We end our supplications with the hymn on page 8 asking the Lord to prepare us fearlessly meet Him at His Second Coming.*

*The Litany, the great prayer of the Church ends with the Kyrie Eleison on page 9.*

Christ, have mercy upon us,  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**PRAYER IS NOT ONLY SPEAKING; IT IS ALSO LISTENING**

*Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. - Job 33:31*

A time of silent prayer is observed.

HYMN 745, *O Lord, Hear My Prayer*

**PRAYER IS OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD IN TRUST**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.- Proverbs 3:5-6*

HYMN 712, *If You But Trust in God to Guide You*

**PRAYER IS AN ACTIVE SEARCH FOR GOD'S WILL  
AND NOT OUR OWN.**

*Father, if thou art willing remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done. - Luke 22:42*

ADELAIDE (1969, #355)

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after Thy will,  
while I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Search me and try me, Master, today!  
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,  
as in Thy presence humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me!

**PRAYER GRANTS US PEACE**

*Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,  
because he trusts in thee.  
Isaiah 26:3*

HYMN 597, *Dona Nobis Pacem*

(Stanzas 1&2)

(The congregation stands to pray The Lord's Prayer together)

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

+HYMN 751, *God of Grace and God of Glory*

CWM RHONDDA

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Fugue in G Major*

J. S. Bach

Appendix 7c. April 30, 2017, worship service.



Moravian Church in America  
*Southern Province*

## *Service of Worship and Prayer*

Sunday, April 30, 2017 - 3:00 p.m.  
Bethania Moravian Church

### *Unity and Diversity*

PRELUDE

Scott Rainey, *organ*

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 133)

How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.

**How wonderful, how beautiful, when sisters and brothers are "one in faith and one in love, one in hope of heaven above!"**

Though we might often be inclined to put ourselves above others, let us come together in humility.

**How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.**

Though we are sometimes tempted to use harsh words, let us come together with gentleness.

**How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.**

Though we may want everything to happen quickly, let us come together with patience.

**How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.**

Though the world around us often encourages hate, let us come together in love.

**How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.**

In humility, gentleness, patience, love and unity,

**Let us worship the God who calls us together.**

HYMN 675, *What Brought Us Together*

CONFESSION (39 A)

WORDS OF WELCOME

SCRIPTURE READING

Zephaniah 3:14 - 20

HYMN 535, *Joining Our Voices*

BUNESSAN

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Peter 1:17 – 23

HYMN 397, *In Essentials Let Us Be United*

COVENANT (185 A)

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 24: 13 – 35

LITURGY FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY, pages 122 - 125

New Hymn(s)

726 Jesus Loves Me

357 He Has Arisen

Silence

Sharing the peace of Christ

Intercessory prayer

Congregations by RCC's

Agencies

Mission Area: Sierra Leone

Mission Province: Cuba

Emerging Ministries

Watchword for the day

(for the week) I Peter 1:23

Psalm 126:23

John 8:36

Lift hands in prayer of praise

388 Father, I Adore You

REFLECTION: *"I Am A Moravian"*

CONCLUSION OF THE LITURGY, pages 125 – 126

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Thanks to Bethania Moravian Church for hosting this service!*

Appendix 7d. July 9, 2017, worship service



Moravian Church in America  
*Southern Province*

*Service of Worship and Prayer*  
**Sunday, July 9, 2017 – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Friedberg Moravian Church**

PRELUDE: *Into the Light*

Philip Wesley

Marty Stanbery, organ

HYMN 554, *God Reveals His Presence*

ARNSBERG (195A)

LITURGY: *In Praise of word and Word*

The Rt. Rev. D. Wayne Burkette

In spirit and in truth, let us offer our worship to God.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls us His Church into being so that we may serve Him on earth until He comes. This call is the source of our being and the inspiration of our service. (*Ground of the Unity*)

**We give thanks to the Lord for His call to be His Church and to serve Him in faith, love and hope.**

In light of divine grace, we recognize ourselves to be a Church of sinners who require forgiveness daily through the mercy of God, who redeems us from our isolation and unites us into a living Church of Jesus Christ. (*Ground of the Unity*)

HUS (22 F)

The word of God, which ne'er shall cease,  
proclaims free pardon, grace, and peace,  
salvation shows in Christ alone,  
the perfect will of God makes known.

O God, in whom our trust we place,  
we thank you for your word of grace;  
help us its precepts to obey  
till we shall live in endless day.

We remember with gratitude how the Lord led the Israelites out of Egypt, humbling them with hunger in the wilderness and then feeding them with manna, in order to help them understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (*Deut. 8:2-3*)

**For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)**

The Triune God as revealed in Holy Scripture is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life. We recognize the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel, and we see our primary mission and our reason for being to consist in bearing witness to this joyful message. (*Ground of the Unity*)

**We give thanks to the Lord for the Word of the Cross and pray for power to live in that Word.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. (*John 1:1, 3*)

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:4)**

MUNICH

O word of God incarnate, O wisdom from on high,  
O truth unchanged, unchanging, O light of our dark sky:  
we praise you for the radiance that from the scripture's page,  
a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (*John 1:14, 16-17*)

**We profess Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life.**  
(*John 14:6*)

Jesus promised us an Advocate – the Spirit of truth - to be with us forever, to abide with us and in us. And Jesus said, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you." (*John 14:16, 26*)

**We give thanks for the Holy Spirit – our Teacher, Guide and Comforter.**

So, let us open our minds and hearts to God's word in scripture and to God's Word in Jesus Christ through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. This is our calling; this is our privilege; this is the unifying power of God, who joins us together mutually, so that knowing ourselves to be members of His body we become willing to serve each other. (*Ground of the Unity*)

**Thanks be to God!**

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 5:1-21; 6:1-9

SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN 605, *Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God*

LAFFERTY

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:1-21

SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN 535, *Joining Our Voices*

BUNESSAN

SCRIPTURE: John 14:1-31

SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN 495, *Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling*

IN BABILONE

INTERCESSIONS from General Liturgy 1: Church Litany, pages 7-8

HYMN

COVENANT (185 A)

The Lord bless and keep us in his favor  
as his chosen, cherished heirs;  
the Lord make his face shine on us ever  
and enfold us in his care.  
The Lord lift his countenance upon us,  
may where-e'er we go his Spirit lead us,  
and his peace on us bestow;  
Amen, Amen, be it so.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: *Rejoice*

Michele McLaughlin

*Our thanks to Friedberg Moravian Church  
for hosting this service of worship!*

Scripture readings are from *The Message Bible*; hymns and intercessions are from the *Moravian Book of Worship*.

**Appendix 7e. October 8, 2017, worship service. To be attached to this report.**