



**From James Slone, pastor of Saint Matthew United Methodist Church, Belleville, Illinois**

### **Saint Matthew United Methodist Church Policy Concerning Same-sex Marriage**

Saint Matthew United Methodist Church is governed by two books in the matter of same-sex marriage.

First by the Bible:

Jesus defines marriage by saying, "... the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

Second by The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, which contains the doctrines, policies, rules, laws and processes of the United Methodist Church:

The Discipline of the United Methodist Church states, "...the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." (§ 304.3; cf. cf. § 2702.1)

"...sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage." (§ 161F)

And the Discipline further states, "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches." (§ 341.6; cf. § 2702.1)

"We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us...." (§ 161F)