

Introduction: The 2019 Special Session of General Conference passed the Traditional Plan that becomes effective on January 1, 2020. In anticipation of the 2020 General Conference, we seek to provide an identity and covenant statement that defines us as a Conference. This statement will help guide us as we make decisions on our future, and as we assess potential partners in ministry.

Vision Statement/Motto: “Opening Hearts, Opening Minds, Opening Doors”

Mission Statement: The mission of the Northern Illinois Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.

Identity Statement: *Following the witness of Jesus, we, the Northern Illinois Conference, are committed to becoming entirely inclusive and welcoming. We foster and celebrate the dignity and sacred worth of all of God’s creation. By the power of the Holy Spirit and Christ’s love, we commit ourselves to grow in love and understanding for one another, and commit to breaking down the walls that divide us. We hold the fullness of Wesleyan theology as a cornerstone of our faith, including the receiving and testing of Holy Scriptures through the lens of reason, tradition, and experience. We seek to do no harm, to do good, and to stay in love with God. We commit to continuing our journey of faith together.*

Covenant Statement: *Therefore, we covenant to the following:*

- ❖ *To live into our baptismal vows to resist evil and injustice and oppression in all forms, including racism, sexism, and every abuse of power and privilege.*
- ❖ *To affirm the full participation of all ages, nations, races, classes, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities.*
- ❖ *To affirm the sacred worth of LGBTQIA+ persons, and commit to being in ministry together.*
- ❖ *To eliminate discriminatory language and the restrictions and penalties of marriage and ordination in the Book of Discipline regarding LGBTQIA+ persons, and stand united in resisting trials and punishments.*
- ❖ *To affirm the right and responsibility of clergy to discern, counsel, and officiate for marriages.*
- ❖ *To engage in acts of justice, grace, mercy, kindness, compassion, repentance and reconciliation.*
- ❖ *To affirm that God works in and through community and acknowledge that Jesus welcomes all people as beloved children of God.*
- ❖ *To embody and exemplify the best practices of our historic Methodist faith, including John Wesley’s emphasis on grace, and to continue the practice of an open table.*

Respectfully submitted,

The Northern Illinois Conference Exploration Team