

Robert Stutes on Facebook in [United Methodist Clergy](#) (6-16-2018)

This morning the Virginia Annual Conference strongly approved a resolution affirming unity amidst diversity. The resolution urged the 2019 General Conference to "resist schism and express openness to diverse perspectives in matters of sexual identity and practice." It also commended prayer for a "way forward that nurtures an inclusive, evangelical, and faithful Church."

There was no vote total recorded as the resolution received healthy support (perhaps 75-80% affirmative - my eyeball estimate) with a show of hands.

The Virginia Annual Conference is the second largest annual conference in the U.S. in total membership, (North Georgia is the largest.)

There was a proposed amendment to give specific support to the ONE CHURCH proposal but the amendment fell far short of a majority approval, so the resolution was approved as originally presented. The sentiment seemed to be to remain open to whatever Spirit-led decision might be made in 2019 rather than endorsing a particular plan. (A copy of the full resolution is attached in the comments.)

## **RESOLUTION 1**

### **Affirm Unity in Christ**

*WHEREAS*, the 2019 called General Conference of the United Methodist Church will be considering proposed changes to the *Book of Discipline* to address United Methodists' differing understandings regarding sexual identity and practice,

*WHEREAS*, unity of the followers of Jesus is a value of our Lord Jesus Christ, (John 17:20-21)

*WHEREAS*, our unity is found, not in common ground on a particular issue, but in our baptism and relationship with God through Jesus Christ, (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

*WHEREAS*, the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, encouraged Christians to "be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion" (John Wesley's sermon, "Catholic Spirit")

*THEREFORE*, be it resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church urges the 2019 General Conference to affirm unity in Christ in the midst of our diversity, to challenge in love all that divides, and to offer to all people God's saving grace through Jesus Christ that transforms the world. We urge and we pray that the 2019 General Conference will resist schism and express openness to diverse perspectives in matters of sexual identity and practice. We urge all faithful United Methodists to pray for a way forward that nurtures an inclusive, evangelical, and faithful Church.