

Following the news from the 2024 UMC General Conference

Following the recently held United Methodist Church's General Conference, in an attempt to provide a maximum of clarity to their constituents, various Boards of Directors have reached out to the Upper Room Emmaus Ministries office. Their main question has been the following "How does the UMC's human sexuality related decision affect the work of the Emmaus Ministries community?"

The following is the essence of our response to those inquiries. It is our hope that it will be helpful as you seek to share with your community members on the matter:

The recent LGBTQ+ decision(s) taken by the UMC do(es) not affect our work.

There are 2 things that are central to this conversation:

- 1- Persons must have clarity on our mission – "to renew Christian disciples and strengthen local churches"*
- 2- Persons must have clarity on the nature of our work: it is ecumenical*

Our mandate – that goes back to the mid-1900s - continues to be an ecumenical one that results in us being in partnership with various local churches and denominations.

On some issues, these local churches and denominations have diverging views. In the context of the Emmaus Ministries, we acknowledge this diversity, but we do not discuss it. Having discussions/arguments over the many theological, political, racial, social, doctrinal ... positions that divide us as a people is not part of our mission.

On these divisive issues, Emmaus Ministries programs are neutral territories on which team members work with God to "build" an environment of grace in which participants are able to experience God's love in refreshing ways.

For that reason, when participants show an interest in having clarity on these divisive issues, we do not give our stance. We encourage them to further the specific conversation with their church leadership. Those leaders will help them gain clarity on their church's position on the matter.

All of this to say that in the context of the Emmaus Ministries, we welcome everyone. However, there is one caveat: no one is allowed to use the programs to promote their views on any of those divisive issues. When this happens, persons (team member or participant) should be immediately excused from further service on the team or participation in the event.

If persons (BoD members, Team members, participants) are having difficulties upholding the approach to the work of the Emmaus Ministries community then, it might be a case in which Emmaus Ministries is not (no longer) a good fit for them. They should not seek to change our mission. They should not seek to reduce the scope of the ministry. They should be treated with respect and encouraged to fulfill their calling in another ministry setting.

Much grace and peace to each and everyone of you.

The Emmaus Ministries Team