

## **Press Release**

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### **Rev. Amy DeLong Faces Church Trial for Telling Truth about Self and Ministry**

As four mainline protestant denominations\* have cleared the path for the ordination of openly gay or lesbian clergy members, the United Methodist Church is convening a church trial against a respected clergy woman.

June 21-23, 2011 at Peace United Methodist Church in Kaukauna, Wisconsin, Rev. Amy DeLong, Osceola, WI, will face charges for being open about her sexual orientation and partnered relationship and for officiating a holy union ceremony for a lesbian couple seeking God's blessing within a worship service. These are deemed "chargeable offenses" for United Methodist clergy.

Aiding Rev. DeLong with her defense is Rev. Scott Campbell, pastor of Harvard-Epworth UMC in Boston, Massachusetts. Campbell notes, "As the Spirit of change is moving across our nation and its churches, some have sought to resist what God is doing by creating more and more restrictive laws. Ultimately they will fail, because the power of the Gospel has never been in the rules it inspires, but in the hearts it changes."

Amy is well-known within the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church as a skilled, loving pastor and as an active member of conference committees. For the past five years, Rev. DeLong has been appointed by her bishop to be the executive director of Kairos CoMotion, a non-profit organization dedicated to progressive theological education and advocacy.

Amy is also nationally known and respected for her ministry. She was invited to contribute to a book by UM Bishop Scott Jones, Staying at the Table: The Gift of Unity for United Methodists, 2008. She was co-editor, with Tex Sample, of The Loyal Opposition: Struggling with the Church on Homosexuality, (2000) which helped shape the debate at the General Conference of that year.

As a pastor, Amy feels called to be in ministry to all people. She notes that there is a momentum toward understanding that gay and lesbian Christians come out of every small town, every local congregation and that the future will be one of embracing all of God's people. She laments that the United Methodist Church continues to categorically discriminate against its gay and lesbian children. "The church proclaims to be an extension of God's unconditional love and acceptance, while simultaneously putting limits on its welcome," DeLong said.

She believes that with its current rules, the United Methodist Church is not only threatening her ordination, but the love and grace poured out at her baptism. "On the surface I think it does look like they want my ordination back. But what it feels like to gay people is that they really want our baptism back."

Now Rev. DeLong is taking a next step in faith to tell the truth and walk confidently into a new day and with this, inviting the United Methodist Church the opportunity to truly open its doors.

Amy's art work expresses her joy at leaving the closet with the words,

"What a relief, triumph, delight to be Myself.

Celebrate the Majesty and Mystery of being you."



More information about Rev. Amy DeLong and this trial

<http://www.loveontrial.org/>

Broadcast video, CBS affiliate, Minneapolis, MN June 3, 2011

WCCO-TV interview:

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2011/06/03/gay-wis-pastor-many-lose-her-job-for-taking-a-stand/>

Information sheet from the Wisconsin Annual Conference

<http://cbsminnesota.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/united-methodist-church-trial.pdf>

Minnesota Clergy declare they will officiate same-sex unions. June 2, 2011

Unite Methodist News Service

<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=IwL4KnN1LtH&b=2789393&ct=10860667>

\* Four denominations have approved ordination for gay and lesbian candidates:

Episcopalian, United Church of Christ, ELCA Lutherans, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).