WHITWORTH COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

…Inviting community and university to know Jesus.

August 11, 2014

Dear Members and Friends of Whitworth Community Presbyterian Church,

Changes in our denomination are allowing local churches options for choices in important matters to us. The Committee on Denominational Issues has been meeting this summer to discuss ways Whitworth Church may process those issues in a productive manner. The General Assembly of our church has defined marriage as a relationship between two committed persons. The GA ruling allows a pastor to follow his/her conscience in marrying same gender couples. Elders in a church may decide if the church building may be used for those marriages. The exact wording of these matters was distributed to our congregation earlier this summer.

In the August *Chimes* Pastor Daniel wrote about this conversation as the topic of our times. As a church we hope to talk in ways that are instructive and helpful to our community. To this end, the church will have a six-week adult education class this fall. There will be a variety of speakers and perspectives, ranging from church conflict in general, the blessings of being Presbyterian, to hearing the testimony of a gay Christian's experience in the church and church communities. There will be two differing sessions on whether scripture allows same gender marriage. Both of these sessions will have lunch discussions following church. The final session will be on pertinent biblical themes related to the larger topics of church unity and missional outreach.

Following the six-week class, Pastor Daniel will host three Wednesday evening discussions for further discussion. These discussions will center on small groups of individuals who can share with each other our understandings. Ultimately, the accumulated perspectives from all these classes and discussions will be conveyed to the elders.

Our goal is to include everyone in our community in this process and to listen to everyone. We intend to post the Sunday sessions online for those who cannot attend.

There will be weekly postcards mailed with exact topics for the classes. There will be handouts with scripture and other matters for us to study on our own. We will provide a reading list that is inclusive of all sides of this issue.

We welcome and encourage your attendance at our class, which will begin on Sunday, September 7 and which will take place during the education hour.

More Adult Education classes for the Fall will begin following the Same-Gender Relationships, the Church, and The Bible class at the end of October. Information about classes will be available soon including a course on Romans by Dr. Jim Edwards.

Sincerely,
Laura Bloxham, Peter Cain, Loran Graham, Kari Hammond, Steve Watts, and John Yoder

WCPC STUDY OF DENOMINATIONAL ISSUES REGARDING SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE
FALL 2014

Week One: Sunday, September 7
Turning Conflict Into Community: Productive Strategies for Dealing With Church Conflict—Ron Pyle

Week Two: Sunday, September 14
Blessed to be Presbyterian: An Overview of Where We Are and How We Got Here—Steve Watts

Week Three: Sunday, September 21
"Love the Sinner and Hate the Sin"—Perspectives of a Gay Christian—Jill Gill

Follow-up Discussion—John Yoder and Jill Gill, 12:30-1:30

Week Four: Sunday, September 28
The Rationale for Why the Bible Would Allow Same-Gender Marriages—John Yoder
Follow-up Discussion—Ron Pyle and John Yoder, 12:30-1:30

Week Five: Sunday October 5
The Rationale for Why the Bible Does Not Allow Same-Gender Marriages—James Edwards
Follow-up Discussion—Ron Pyle and James Edwards: 12:30-1:30

Week Six, Sunday, October 12
Exclusion and Embrace: A Survey of Pertinent Biblical Principles—WCPC Members

Week Seven, Wednesday, October 15

Dinner and discussion, Daniel White Moderator, dinner at 5:45 (please RSVP), discussion at 6:30

Week Eight, Wednesday, October 22

Dinner and discussion, Daniel White Moderator, dinner at 5:45 (please RSVP), discussion at 6:30

Week Nine, Wednesday, October 29

Dinner and discussion, Daniel White Moderator, dinner at 5:45 (please RSVP), discussion at 6:30
The final gathering will include a time for a feedback survey.