

Methodist church in D.C. to recognize gay unions: Clintons' former congregation

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A United Methodist congregation in Washington, D.C., the church attended by President Bill Clinton and Senator Hillary Clinton, has changed its policy to recognize—but not “celebrate”—same-gender partnerships.

Foundry United Methodist Church’s senior pastor, Dean Snyder, announced the plan to begin leading services that “recognize and honor lesbian and gay committed relationships.” The congregation would join what United Methodist News Service called “a handful” of congregations in the denomination that follow this practice.

Snyder advised his congregation last November that the services would not be “ceremonies that celebrate” homosexual partnerships. He cited the UMC Book of Discipline’s sanction against clergy performing marriage-like ceremonies for same-sex couples.

Foundry has a “large gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender membership,” the pastor said, noting that the congregation considered the option for three years. He said the Book of Discipline is clear that homosexual persons “are individuals of sacred worth.”

Patricia Miller, executive director of the Confessing Movement Within the United Methodist Church, told United Methodist News Service that Foundry is still violating church law developed at the UMC’s 1996 quadrennial meeting. Since then, United Methodist general conferences have maintained that the practice of homosexuality is “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Bishop John R. Schol of the Baltimore-Washington Conference said Snyder did not seek his advice or permission. Schol acknowledged the diverse makeup of Foundry Church and said that as far as he knew, Snyder had not sought publicity for the change.