June 26, 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers;

As you know, the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled in a 5-4 ruling that states cannot ban same gender marriage. Gay and lesbian couples across the country have a constitutional right to marry. This significant change in our civil law impacts each of us as we also live within the polity and discipline of the United Methodist Church.

As we seek to be in ministry with all persons, this law does not change what is and what is not allowed by United Methodist pastors and congregations. In a marriage ceremony of same gender persons, pastors may not lead the declaration of intent, lead the exchange of wedding vows and ring vows, or sign marriage certificates. Our church law does not prohibit offering a prayer or a homily in such a ceremony.

As your pastoral leader, I pray for the United Methodist Church in this season. I pray that we will lead with deep respect for each other. This is not a time to draw lines in the sand but rather a time to come together in prayer for one another and for all those with whom God calls us to be in ministry.

Serving Christ With You,

Bishop William T. McAlilly