

More clergy vow to marry gay couples

By [John Dart](#)

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[Risking](#)

[their careers or standing](#) in the United Methodist Church, at least 164 clergy and six congregations from Long Island to the Catskill Mountains and southern Connecticut are vowing to marry same-sex couples. Hundreds of UMC clergy elsewhere in the U.S. have made similar pledges, but this new network is actively contacting LGBT groups with their offers and publishing lists of the willing clergy and supportive congregations.

The group "[We do!](#)

[Methodists Living Marriage Equality](#)" announced on October 17 a covenant also signed by 721 laypeople who declared, "We refuse to discriminate against any of God's children and pledge to make marriage equality a lived reality" within the New York Annual Conference, a geographic region of 73 congregations. Both New York and Connecticut have legalized gay marriage.

"This is about pastoral care, about welcoming all people, but especially the marginalized and the oppressed, like Jesus did," said Sara Lamar-Sterling, the minister at First and Summerfield United Methodist Church in New Haven. The "We do!" project is co-sponsored by another independent group, the New York chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action.