

Lesbian minister to appeal her defrocking: Irene "Beth" Stroud

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A United Methodist pastor who was defrocked because she is living in a lesbian relationship said she will appeal the verdict, in part to force the church to confront its deep divisions over homosexuality.

Irene "Beth" Stroud was stripped of her ministerial credentials in a church trial on December 2 after she was found guilty of violating a church ban on "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy. She remains a paid staff member at First United Methodist Church of Germantown in Philadelphia.

Stroud announced her appeal after Christmas. "Whether my appeal is successful or unsuccessful, my hope is that the discussion will be healthy in the long run for the church and will ultimately change those portions of the [constitution] that I feel are morally wrong," she said in an interview. The case now goes to an appeals panel of the church's Northeastern Jurisdiction. -*Religion News Service*