

Mennonite Church USA Ordains First Openly Homosexual 'Pastor'

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NEDERLAND, Co. — Mennonite Church USA has ordained its first openly homosexual pastor, reports state.

According to *Mennonite World Review*, the Mountain States Conference, a division of the Mennonite Church USA, has approved the ministerial license of a Colorado woman who identifies as a lesbian.

Theda Good, who is in a relationship with another woman, began serving with First Mennonite Church of Denver in 2012, and has a master's degree from Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia. Her church submitted a letter requesting her licensure last year, and the Conference has been reviewing the matter over a period of many months.

A series of meetings have been held to discuss the request, including with Good and members of her church.

"Much of the work centered around the consideration of a person whose gifts and call to ministry are clearly affirmed, yet is in a committed same-sex relationship, which varies from denominational statements," the Conference outlined in a press release.

On November 24th, the Ministerial Council met for the second time with Good and agreed to accept her request for ordination. The matter then moved to the Leadership Board on December 1st, who agreed unanimously to ordain Good.

She will receive her license on February 2nd to serve as Pastor of Nurture and Fellowship at First Mennonite Church of Denver.

The Mountain States Conference has acknowledged that the decision to ordain Good is controversial.

"It is the desire of the Leadership Board to function and communicate with a spirit of deep humility, joyfully acknowledging the work of God in our midst, and with a sense of sadness recognizing the pain that this causes some of the sisters and brothers that we love in Mennonite Church USA," it wrote.

Reaction to the matter has been mixed.

"I applaud the Mountain States Mennonite Conference for choosing grace over law; for affirming common humanity over the perception of sexuality," one commenter wrote. "Grace is where love is free to happen. And where there is love, there is God. Because God happens when love happens."

"If you really loved everyone in the Mennonite Church then you would not be doing what you are doing," another stated. "Because of your actions you will be bringing a curtain of darkness and shame to the entire Mennonite Church. I feel that you have embarked upon a slippery slope that will only bring pain, confusion, heartache, and disunity. I pray that God will not treat the Mennonite Church like he treated Sodom and Gomorrah."

