

July 21, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is with great interest that we have watched the events in the West Michigan Annual Conference regarding Rev. Benjamin Hutchison and Cassopolis UMC. We affirm the actions taken by the District Superintendent and the Cabinet in holding Rev. Hutchison accountable to standards of clergy conduct elucidated in the *Book of Discipline*.

A news article from the *South Bend Tribune* regarding the marriage of Benjamin Hutchison and Monty Hutchison states the following: "Pastor Ginny Mikita, of Rockford, Mich. — a certified candidate for ordination by UMC — performed the ceremony and was one of the two clergy who signed the marriage certificate. On Tuesday, Mikita was ordained online by the Universal Life Church (not affiliated with UMC), so she could officiate Friday."

Ms. Mikita has not only violated the prohibition placed upon certified candidates for ministry from presiding at same-sex unions; by receiving ordination in the Universal Life Church, Ms. Mikita has automatically forfeited her standing as a member in The United Methodist Church and as a certified candidate for ministry.* We write this letter to the Grand Rapids District Committee on Ministry, urging you to uphold the *Book of Discipline* and discontinue Ms. Mikita from the candidacy process.

Signed,

The Rev. Evan W. Rohrs-Dodge, Elder in Full Connection, Greater New Jersey Conference
The Rev. Drew McIntyre, Elder in Full Connection, Western North Carolina Conference
The Rev. Dr. Stephen Rankin, Elder in Full Connection, North Texas Conference

cc. Rev. Bill Haggard, District Superintendent, Grand Rapids District
cc. Bishop Deborah Kieseey, Resident Bishop, Michigan Episcopal Area

**Book of Discipline*, par. 241, 314.1, and Judicial Council decision 696.